

Meet the bossiest Woman in the world
John Walsh on a cabbie's pin-up



Win a

Colin Jackson, a champion in exile

Exclusive interview Sport Section, page 30

Three British soldiers die in Bosnia blast

Armoured vehicle blown up by mine

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY

Three British soldiers in the multinational Bosnia peace force were killed yesterday when their vehicle hit a land mine in west-central Bosnia. They were the first fatal casu-

joined Nato's Bosnia peace operation. The soldiers were travelling in an armoured vehicle that hit a mine near Mrkonjic Grad, in an area which is due to be returned from Croat to Bosnian Serb control under the Dayton peace agreement.

alties to British troops since they

Lieutenant-Colonel David Shaw, an Army spokesman in Gornji Vakuf, said attempts to get to the vehicle were hampered by difficult weather and by the possibility of other, unmarked land mines.

The men's names and units were not made immediately available. Col Shaw said three men had been travelling with a second British armoured vehicle when the explosion_occurred. The incident happened in a volatile area, nicknamed the

Until yesterday the British were delighted with the success of their operation, supervising the withdrawal of Croat forces from the area, ensuring the

and JOJO MOYES

Britain's privatised utilities yes-

quiry after the Gas Consumers

Council, which last year record-

ed the highest number of com-

plaints - 49,104 - for almost a decade, accused British Gas of

misleading people on "peace of

mind" service contracts. Most

of those approaching the coun-

cil had complained but failed to

A warning sent on Saturday

by the National Grid to the 12

regional electricity companies in

England and Wales said up to

2 million homes could be left

5pm peak this evening. The in-

dustry was hraced for record

peaks in electricity demand if

The crisis is partly due to

British Gas calling in its rights

to cut off very large users - in-

the cold weather persisted.

receive satisfactory replies.

hetween Croats and Serbs and marking all the minefields.

There are estimated to be up 6 million mines scattered around Bosnia. Although the former warring factions have tried to identify as many as possible, many unmarked minefields remain. Nato engineers believe no more than 30 per cent have been marked.

The British armoured vehicles bit yesterday were travelling west of Mrkonjic Grad, in an area where the Nato-led peace force, I-For, did not believe the three warring sides had laid mines. Part of the peace agreement is for the warring sides to hand over maps of where they put mines.

The British unit in the area

is 4 Armoured Brigade, of Gulf war fame. Its troops come from the Second Battalion The Light Infantry and the Royal Fusiliers, with support from the Royal Artillery and the Royal Logistic Corps. The peace implementation force will eventually total 60,000 troops. Britain has about 13,000 men and women taking

Up to vesterday, 35 soldiers of the Nato-led peace force had heen injured since the troops hegan arriving in Bosnia, most of them in mine accidents. Four soldiers had died, including one British soldier who killed himself at Christmas

from the zone of separation one Italian were killed in Sara-

Energy crisis as grid

warns of power cuts

jevo last week when a piece of ordnance which one of them brought in from the field exploded in their sleeping quarters. An American officer was grazed in the neck yesterday by a bullet which struck him as he walked on the grounds of a Sarajevo hotel complex used by Nato as headquarters for its ground force commander in Bosnia. Nato said he"was shot

in an apparent sniper incident". French Nato forces reported two separate shooting incidents on Saturday in the area, hut could not identify the firing points or the targets.

Other parts of the peace deal took effect yesterday when 82 Bosnian government prisoners of war, among them two women holding a haby who was born in captivity, walked to freedom at Sarajevo airport. However, their Serb captors refused to free all their detainees. Jubilant relatives greeted the

Muslim men in the Sarajevo suhurb of Dobrinja. But for some women there were only tears when they found their husbands and sons were not among those released.

A Red Cross spokesman; Pierre Gauthier, confirmed the Serbs had released 74 men from prison in Foca, eastern Bosnia, at the airport, while in central Bosnia the Muslim-led government freed 76 Serb prisoners from Travnik.

Old foes, page 8

Legends roll back the years just for fun, fun, fun



They may have lost their hair and the waists are a bit thicker, but the music sounds the same. Thirty years after his last performance in Britain, Brian Wilson (front left) and the Beach Boys played in Brixton, south London yesterday with Status Quo.

'n rollers came together because Wilson has re-recorded his classic single, "Fan, Fan, Fam" with Status Quo, who are celebrating 30 years in the music business. Mike Love, Beach Boys vocalist and co-writer of "Fun, Fun. Fun.", said: "We have always been known for our vocals, while Quo are famous for their guitar sound.

The song is dynamic with the two put together." With Wilson are Francis Rossi (Status Quo, front right) and (back, left to right) Mike Love (Beach Boys, in cap), Rick Partitt (Status Quo), Al Jardine (Beach Boys), Jeff Rich (Status Quo)

Challenge to Keays court gag

JAMES CUSICK

The Lord Chancellor's Department will today study the legal implications of parliamentary tactics used by a Labour MP to sidestep a High Court gagging order and hring renewed publicity to the illegitimate daughter of Lord Parkinson.

Brian Sedgemore MP has tabled a House of Commons motion which states: "This House calls for a change in the law to prevent a gross denial of human rights as in the case of Sara Keays and her daughter."

1983, when Mr Parkinson was Secretary of Trade for Trade and Industry, it was revealed that Miss Keays was carrying his child. The couple had conducted a lengthy affair. The scandal wrecked Lord Parkinson's ambitions of higher political office.

After the birth of their daughter, on New Year's Eve 1983, a number of legal battles over publicity were fought out in the courts.

The latest order, just after Christmas last year, was granted in the Court of Appeal which ruled that the gagging or-

Court order: Sarah Keays

which is protected by parlia-

battle against the adversity of a brain tumour, frequent fits, eventual surgical removal of the tumour and a lengthy recuper-The motion continues that

"the mother has every right now to fight for proper educational provision for her daughter using publicity to pursue her Miss Keays has sought and

received some of the best medical care in the world. It is understood that the child has made remarkable progress after the attention of renowned paediatric specialists outside

It is also understood, from sources, that a television film has been made of the child's treatment, which was said to be comment yesterday.

"very moving". Under the terms of the gagging order, it cannot be shown. In addition to the attention

of the Lord Chancellor's office, it is likely that lawyers representing Lord Parkinson will be studying Mr Sedgemore's mo-The Labour MP who is him-

self a qualified barrister, will know that his motion is effectively protected in the 1789 Bill of Rights which states that parliamentary proceedings 'may not be impeached" by any court in the land. However, if challenged, the case could go on to be tested in the European

Neither Mr Sedgemore nor Miss Keays were available to

terday became embroiled in The child, Flora, aged 12, is der on the child, now aged 12, controversy again after it mentary privilege, states that the LIK. The latest hlow to British Gas Miss Keays and the child had handicapped after suffering must remain till she reached emerged that complaints about been subjected to "a blanket gag on all publicity relating to a child comes just weeks before it is due adulthood. She was also refused British Gas more than doubled from a brain tumour at infancy. to lose its monopoly over do-mestic customers, with compe-Miss Keays is the former secretary of Cecil Parkinson. In last year and the National Grid an appeal to the Lords. Mr Sedgemore's motion, who has fought a magnificent warned of power cuts tonight. tition scheduled to start in the Labour called for a public in-

Visitors to Britain's luckiest

second regular to become a Na-tional Lottery millionaire.

came in spite of warnings issued

MATERNITY NO TV - NO HEM POWER

cluding those supplying power stations - who get cheaper gas in return for agreeing to interruptions in supply when demand from other consumers soars.

Last night Labour demanded a public inquiry, urging the Select Committee on Trade without power at around the and Industry to look at the performance of the privatised utilities. Nigel Griffiths, Labour's consumer affairs spokesman, accused the Government of sitting "impotently on the sidelines".

policy except to hand over responsibility to irresponsible energy companies," Mr Griffiths said. "These services are falling

south-west of England in April. Ian Powe, director of the Consumer Council said that the escalation in complaints 12 months ago that British Gas needed urgently to restore cus-

tomers confidence before rivals entered the marketplace. Some other suppliers including offshore firms and elec-

Gas prices by up to 15 per cent. Roy Gardner, the director widely tipped to succeed Cedric Brown as chief executive, said: "Recent severe weather has stretched our resources even further as our service business experienced double the normal number of calls."

tricity companies are saying they will be undercutting British

Jackie Green, 26, was drinking with friends in the White Lion in Failsworth, Greater Manchester, on Saturday when her numbers came up on the pub's television, winning her about £10m of the shared rollover £40m jackpot.
It was win the second jackpot Pipeline row, page 16 | win for White Lion regulars.

oubles all round at 'luckiest pub' The pub is also the favourite haunt of John Beisty, who with partner Mel Eddison, shared a £2.5m win last summer.

pub were last night hoping "Jackie's a regular here – a happy, single girl who enjoys a night out with her pals – and she there was something in the beer as they drank a toast to the was just sat checking the numbers out on her ticket," said

landlord's son Lionel Kemp. "We thought at first she'd won £100,000 and then when the last number came up the place just went wild. Jackie couldn't speak. She burst into tears and began shaking like a leaf. All the lads in the vault were cheering and shouting.

Britain's latest multi-millionaire then spent the next 20 minutes in the ladies' toilet, after being taken in there by her

"She was too dazed to celebrate and they left the pub 20 minutes later, still in a state of shock," Mr Kemp said. "Everyone is really pleased for her. She's just a normal, happy-go-

lucky girl."
Mr Eddison said yesterday: "I just don't believe there's another winner from that puh - they must put something in the beer. I don't know Jackie but my partner, John Beisty, is a regular at the White Lion. He still goes in

He said he was "really pleased" for the latest winner, adding: "Γm convinced Failsworth is a lucky place and I'm going to win again."

Last night Ms Green, an of-

fice worker who lives with her divorced father, Bob, was not to be found at the White Lion. She and her family were said to be celehrating at a Manchester botel. Camelot said that a winner "would be going public" in Manchester today.

New clue to mystery killer Glasgow police want to exhume the body of a man who has been linked to a Scottish serial killer by genetic fingerprinting.

Pennsylvania siege Police were trying to negotiate

with a millionaire who barricaded himself in his Pennsylvania home after shooting a former wrestling star. Page 8

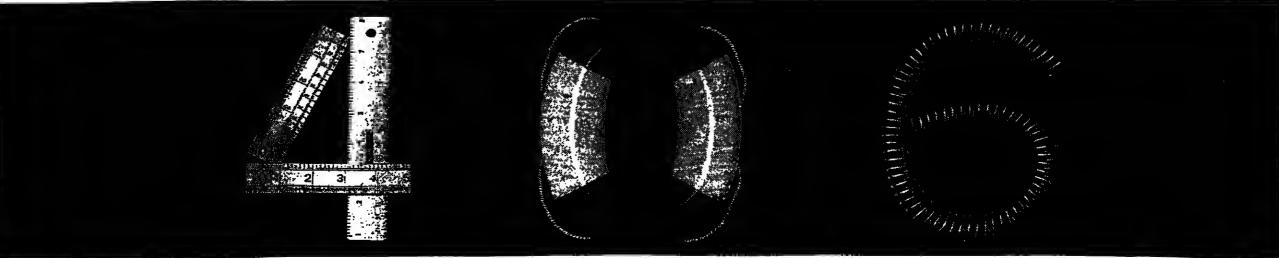


BUSINESS 15-17 COMMENT 12,13 CROSSWORD 18 ESSAY 11 GAZETTE 14 LAW SUMMARIES 14 LEADING ARTICLES 12 LETTERS 12 NEWS 2-10,18 OBITUARIES 14 SHARES 15



ARCHITECTURE 6,23 ARTS 5 CHESS 26 CROSSWORD 26 LISTINGS 24,25 NETWORK 7-22 REVIEWS 6,23 TELEVISION & RADIO 27,28 WEATHER 25

there.



No signs of thaw in Anglo-Irish chill

DAVID MCKITTRIÇK Ireland Correspondent

Anglo-Irish relations remained as chilly as the weather at the weekend, with Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring accusing Britain of trying to "divide and conquer" his government. Sinn Fein, meanwhile, declared that it not take part in any new

Mr Spring made it clear that Dublin had registered a stroag protest both against John Major's proposal of an election as the next stage of the peace

Coastguards were last night mounting a security vigil on six sperm whales which died after

becoming stranded on a North

Hoards of onlookers flocked to Cruden Bay beach, north of

Aberdeen, after the 25ft-long

mammals were discovered yesterday, but they were kept away

from the site by a police cordon. Desperate attempts were made by animal protection of-

ficers to save one of the whales

found barely alive, but it died before a vet reached the scene.

The vet eventually pronounced

dead all the whales - some weighing more than 10 tons.

Environmental health offi-

cers, police and coastguards

spent the day examining ways of

disposing of the huge mammals.

It also emerged that five of the

creatures may have perished while trying to escort a sick

whale as it headed towards

Disposing of the whales has been described as "extremely

complicated" by coastguards

hecause they are beached on soft sand which would hamper

attempts to use heavy lifting

equipment. If the animals are

buried on the beach a protective fence would have to be crected around the grave to pro-

SSPCA inspector Sylvester

Hay said: "It appears the dom-

iaant whale in the school had been ill and came in so close to shore that it became stuck on

a sandbank and could not return

The other whales appear to have followed it in and also be-

shallow water,

tect public health.

to the deeper water.

JOHN RENTOUL

their best subjects.

Political Correspondent

Tony Blair, the Labour leader.

will again try to turn the edu-

cation debate away from the is-

suc of selective schools today by

promoting controversial plans

for "fast-tracking" hright chil-dren, moving them up a year in

The move is aimed at reas-

suring so-called "aspirational"

parents that Labour is the par-

ty of high standards, after the

negative signals sent by last

week's Labour backlash against

health spokeswoman Harriet

Harman's decision to send her

son to a selective grammar

But fast-tracking is also re-

garded with suspicion by teach-

ing unions - and much of the

Labour Party - for promoting se-lection within schools rather

than between them. John Sut-

ton, general secretary of the

Sea beach

process and against his alleged lack of consultation with

He said on Irish radio: "The British know full well how we feel after the last few days. We have made it very clear, and we will not be treated in this manner for the future." Mr Spring's words will not help the atmosphere at his Anglo-Irish conference meeting with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Patrick Mayhew, on Thursday.

Mr Spring, asked about al-leged British hriefings that his

said: "That's been an old British tactic down through the years. That's not just an Irish experience; we have seen this in many parts of the world. The British set out lo divide and conquer. They have made attempts be-

fore to divide us and they have

not succeeded." While Unionist parties have warmly welcomed the election move, it is clear that all sections of Nationalist opinion were offended by Mr Major's proposal and the way in which he made

position differed from that of it. The belief that he was at least the Taoiseach, John Bruton, partly motivated by the hope of securing Unionist support in the Commons is now common currency among Nationalist

> An expression of defiance and opposition came from Sinn Fein yesterday, with Martin McGuinness assuring thousands of at a Londonderry rally to commemorate the Bloody Sunday shootings: "We are not going to be part of their as-

Mr McGuinness added: "The Unionists want their assembly

Sperm whales follow leader to death on beach

and the British Government wants to give them their assembly, harking back to the days of the old Stormont. No matter what they say, that is exactly what they are doing. Well, we are not going to give them their new Stormont."

The Social Democratic and Labour Party deputy leader, Seamus Mallon, also attacked the Government, accusing Mr Major of trying to huy Unionist votes and claiming: "He has done the dirty on the Irish gov-emment in a very public and hu-miliating way." The SDLP

Mr Major tomorrow. Meanwhile, Mr Mallon also

attacked Tony Blair, saying the Labour leader "should begin to realise that you cannot solve problems simply by running in the slipstream of the Prime

He said: "I find it very difficult to understand the situation in the House of Commons, on the single most important issue affecting Northern Ireland, that Mr Blair and the Labour Party seem to be willy-nilly support-ing the Government position." Donald Dewar, the Labour Chief Whip, said he was sorry Mr Mallon felt as strongly as he did on the issue. He said Labour took a "totally" bipar-tisan approach to Ulster and wanted to talk to all the groups

involved to move things on.

Mo Mowlam, Labour's Northern Ireland spokeswoman, tried to assuage SDLP anger on Saturday by criticising John Major for failing to con-sult them. But she went on: "That does not mean in any way we will split from our bipartisan approach."

£16,000 for man wrongly jailed

A man who was wrongly con-victed of an armed robbery has been paid £16,000 in compensation by the Home Office.

Michael Boler, in his 30s, from Chesterfield, Derbyshire. was jailed for 10 years for a raid on the Halifax building society in Derby in 1989. Two witnesses picked him out at an identi-

ty parade despite an alibi. His case was taken to the Appeal Court, which ordered a retrial, after another man confessed. The Crown Prosecution Service then dropped the charges. The award was a discretionary payment.

George' crowned

The Madness of King George scooped three Evening Standard Film Award awards - for best direction, screenplay and cinematography. Jonathan Pryce won the best actor award for his

Food for thought

balanced diet, a report on eat-ing habits suggests. The survey of more than 100 households by Family Circle magazine and the National Dairy Council found that 62 per cent of women and 73 per cent of men ate too much fat with nourishing foods often being substituted for cakes, bis-

in the

and

Iwick-

Irish

place.

it Cols their

olders.

g, and clford

%D-:

Mr Brown immediately chalsinking to a new low in "smears'

The Labour Deputy Leader, what Labour has always said -

many years.
"Labour traditionally is on the side of the villain, whereas the Tories are on the side of the

"When we have introduced tougher sentencing, have questioned the right to silence, have increased maximum sentences - every time, Labour votes against these things. The fact is, we have now got more people in prison, we have got more prisons being built, we have got

and employment, Mr Heseltine and the Conservatives are de-scending into personalised attacks, smears and dirty tricks.

the plan, writes John Renton!

the Stock Exchange in May and John Prescott, the deputy

Labour leader, is believed to be close to finalising a plan to ac-

that Labour had scrapped plans

return for public subsidy.

Railtrack will be floated on

the side of the villain".

John Prescott, campaigning in Hemsworth, said: "It proves that the Tories intend to fight the dirtiest general election campaign ever."

more policemen on the heat." But Mr Brown hit back, saying: "All decent-minded people will be horrified that instead of addressing the country's problems with health, education

Brown furious at Tory crime attack

The Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, and the Shadow Chancellor, Gordon Brown, were embroiled in a furious row last night after Labour was hranded the criminal's friend.

Mr Heseltine - broadening Tory accusations of "Labour hypocrisy from education to aw and order - sparked Opposition outrage by declaring that Tony Blair's party was "on

lenged the Deputy Prime Minister to withdraw his "preposterous" remark, and accused the Conservative Party of and "dirty tricks".

Mr Heseltine levelled his charge in a radio interview, in which he stressed that the Tories would spearhead a "very positive" election campaign which would emphasise improving economic prospects.

He told BBC Radio 4's The World This Weekend: "There are very positive aspects. We have the most successful economy in western Europe, we have had unemployment falling for 28

But training his fire on Labour's "hypocrisy on crime" Mr Heseltine said: "Labour today is saying it wants to be tough on crime, but it votes against all the things the Conservatives have done to achieve one of the fastest-falling crime rates we have seen in this country for

performance as Lytton Strachey in Carington, and Kristin Scott-Thomas won best actress, for the second year running, with Angels and Insects.

Pamilies appear seriously confused about what is meant by a cuits, puddings and soft drinks.

Social unrest

A campaign to help social workers who are being bullied by their managers has been launched following an increase in threats and intimidation. The British Union of Social Work Employees, representing 3,000 social workers, says it has highlighted the problem after being "overwhelmed" with complaints.

Canteens in decline

The number of workplace canteens has fullen "drastically" off.
over the past decade and meal prices have gone up above the rate of inflation, it was revealed. A survey by the Labour Research Department found the average price of a cap of canteen tea has gone up by 21 per cent since 1991 – from 14p to 17p – with most most forms. to 17p - with most most firms only giving staff 30 minutes to eat lunch.

Fish for stress

People suffering from stress should stop eating junk food, join a gym, buy tropical fish and have energetic sex, says a guide on how to relieve the problem. Further advice in Personal Success magazine, which says more than 90 million working days are lost each year in the UK because of stress, include writing swear words on a piece

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Winter's toll: Sub-zero temperatures claim a child's life as forecasters wam of more bitterly cold weather

Sandy grave: One of the six sperm whales that died after becoming beached at Curden Bay, in Aberdeenshire

JOHN RENTOUL

The Child Support Agency is to

be given new powers to in-quire into the lifestyle of men

suspected of passing assets to

second wives in order to avoid

maintenance payments to chil-

dren of first marriages, the so-cial security minister, Andrew

Mitchell, confirmed yesterday.

The CSA will be able to ig-

nore tax returns and certified ac-

counts to make a judgement on standards of living, and men may have to explain how they

can afford expensive cars, lux-

ury homes and foreign holidays.

"It's the cavalry coming over the hill for a small but impor-

tant minority of people," Mr Mitchell told the Independent.

He referred to evidence high-

lighted by the CSA of a num-

ber of cases where apparently rich men had transferred all or

most of their assets into the

name of a new wife or mistress.

Boy, 5, is found frozen to death

versionary statement", saying

the "social priority area al-

lowance" was tried in the 1970s

Mr Blair's plans for the existing

160 selective grammar schools

continued to provoke Labour critics yesterday. Roy Hatters-

ley, the former deputy Labour

leader, said: "There is a need for

Mr Blair will say nothing about existing selective schools

in his speech, except to insist:

The real issue is not selection

in 160 schools, it is standards in

25,000 schools serving seven

ucation spokesman, last week

expanded on party policy, which

is that the fate of selective

schools is a matter for "local

agreement". He said the parents

of children in all local primary

schools would be balloted.

David Blunkett, Labour's ed-

Meanwhile, uncertainty over

and "it didn't work".

clarification."

million childrea".

death after apparently becoming trapped in the back yard of a derelict house. Damian Williams was last

seen building a snowman outside his home in Auhrey Street. of the height of gate latch. Middleshrough, on Saturday. His body was found yesterday just 200 yards from his home. Police said there were no suspicious circumstances and the

post-mortem examination had a news conference the boy the neighbourhood, a network house where Damian's body was found "features consistent with death from hypothermia".

Blair plans to deflect

heat over education

said: "No one seems able to get

away from talking about our

most able children. I cannot for

the life of me see what this will

do for middle-ability children,

who are most failed by the pre-

speech on social policy, to be de-

livered today to a church audi-

ence at Southwark Cathedral.

south London, to focus on ed-

ucation. His aides said this re-

flected his conviction that the

furore over Ms Harman's de-

eision can be turned to his ad-

firmed that "people are more concerned ahout where they

send their children to school

than where Harriet sends her

Mr Blair's speech will outline

plans for incentives for the best

graduate teachers to go to "sink" inner-city schools. Mr

children they said.

Informal opinion polling con-

Mr Blair has rewritten a

sent system.

Secondary Heads Association, Sutton dismissed this as "a di-

One theory was that Damian got into the disused property and could not get out because His fully-clothed body was found in the yard, which has two

metre high walls, by police searching the area. Superintendent Maurice pathologist who carried out the Jones, of Cleveland police, told

could have fallen accidentally, become unconscious and died

Saturday. Damian, who has a younger sister and two older brothers, was described as a lively boy who knew the area well. He had

been known to play in the emp-

of terraced streets near the centre of town.

from the cold overnight.

The boy's mother Patricia, 25, reported him missing at 2pm on returned home shortly afterwards. During the search, police tracker dogs and an aircraft were used, A patrol car also toured the area appealing for information by loud hailer. Yesterday, children were still

found. A police car guarded the entrance to the back alley, but the only evidence of what had happened boy was a hunch of red carnations laid on the doorstep of the derelict house. With the flowers was an In Sympathy card which read: "Damian - you will always be in our hearts and minds for ever.

CSA to target high-life

men with second wives

The measures were fore-shadowed in last year's white pa-

per on CSA reform, in response

to a storm of criticism of its rigid

formula for calculating main-

tenance payments. The package, which has now had "flesh put on

the bones", will be tested in a

pilot scheme in Hastings in April and should go nationwide

at the end of the year. Men ac-

cused of high living while de-

claring low assets and income

will have the right of appeal to an independent tribunal.

But groups campaigning

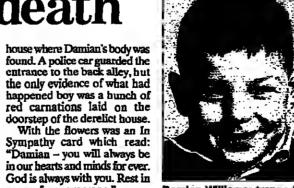
against the CSA condemned the

new powers as a "snoopers'

charter". Paul Doxey of the Net-work Against the CSA said: "The CSA is giving a great deal of scope to vindictive ex-

wives." Opponents fear women

will be encouraged to spy on their former husbands and col-



Photograph: Chris James

pected to publish a report on Thursday backing the plan, which will describe "asset-rich,

income-poor" fathers as one of

the biggest problems facing

lone mothers. David Shaw,

Conservative MP for Dover

and a committee member, said:

"There are still a lot of men who

don't want to pay a penny to-wards their first family, and are

hecoming increasingly sophis-

ticated at beating the system by

passing their money to their

companies or to new wives." In one case, Terri West, a

mother of two, campaigned

against CSA decisions to reduce

her former husband's contri-

butions to zero. She said Chris

Tsangarides, a record produc-

er, lived in a £300,000 house,

had a Porsche, two BMWs and

employed a gardener and clean-er. The CSA was only allowed

lect evidence of high speading. to rule on the basis of audited

curity select committee is ex- earned £14,340 a year.

But the Commons social se- accounts which showed he

Wind chill could turn roads into ice rinks **HOUSE INSURANCE** Motoring organisations were said: "The temperature will cars left idle over the weekend journey and keep a good gap be-

ty properties dotted around playing outside the boarded-up

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last night bracing themselves for chaos on the roads today. struggle to get above freezing point, but with the wind chill fac-Weather forecasters were pre- tor it will feel like minus 10C or dicting that the freeze would re- minus 12C." new its grip oa Britain, with icy winds sweeping in across eastern Europe to create "bitterly cold" conditions.

Yesterday's brief thaw left a lot of surface water - which the closed, and conditions in Peak AA and RAC warned would freeze overnight to turn roads into ice rinks.

The motoring organisations said the thaw had cleared most

snow-blocked roads yesterday. Only minor roads in Scotland and the North-east remained District passes were difficult, the RAC said.

failed to start. An AA spokesman said: "We are expecting a large number of breakdowns because we have got the worst weather for cars'

electrical systems - very cold

Drivers should take extra care in the icy conditions, it added. "The advice is to do cverything slowly - keep speeds an epidemic of hurst pipes down, don't stamp on the across the country over the The AA was predicting a brakes, don't jerk the steering weekend, the Water Services As-The London Weather Centre blizzard of calls this morning, as wheel. Leave entra time for your sociation said.

After a night of temperatures well below zero, snow thurries were forecast to move in from the east coast and work their way westwards across the country, but no significant snowfall was expected, the London Weather Centre said.

Water companies dealt with

rail buy-back restore Railtrack to public ownership, in response to what it ar-gued were "black propaganda" stories that it had abandoned

News of the move emerged after Clare Short, Labour's transport spokeswoman, condemned stories in Saturday's tween you and the car in front." newspapers that she had told Railtrack boss John Edmonds

for renationalisation. "Railtrack chief executive John Edmonds phoned me to apologise about black propaganda that appeared in Saturday's papers and he pledged he was clear no such statement has

been made," Ms Short said. Philip Dewhurst, Railtrack's

Labour has taken an important said, of journalists who ask him step towards a firm promise to about Labour policy: "I refer restore Railtrack to public own-

Labour set for

Ms Short's deputy. Brian Wilson, accused Railtrack of planting the story in order to influence a meeting today between the Government's advisers Warburg and potential City investors. Equally, however. Labour is keen to disrupt May's flotation without promisquire the company gradually in ing to spend large sums of money in government.

It is understood that a com-

mittee chaired by Mr Prescott favours a plan to divert some of the taxpayers' subsidy from the train operators to Railtrack But the plan also opens the possibility of the Government acquiring shares in Railtrack in return for subsidy which would have gone into the railway system in any case.

Labour urgently needs to re-solve its detailed position on the sell-off in the next few weeks, because prospectuses for the sale, to be published in March, director of communications, will include a statement of the denied planting the stories. He party's intentions.

Police find **DNA** link in hunt for 1960s killer

JOHN ARLIDGE Scotland Correspondent

Detectives in Glasgow are to seek permission to exhume the hody of a man they believe to be the notorious "Bible John" who murdered three women in the late 1960s.

Genetic fingerprinting techniques, which were not available 30 years ago, have established a link between the dead man. who is huried in Lanarkshire. and 29-year-old Helen Puttock who was murdered in 1969. The mother-of-two was one of three women killed after being picked up by a man - believed to be Bible John - at the popular Barrowland ballroom in the east end of the city.

Officers who carried out the initial investigation helieved all three murders were committed by the man, who gained his nickname by quoting the Bible in conversation. Each victim was strangled after leaving the club. The killings, the first of which come in early 1968, ted to the city's biggest ever manhunt. but the murderer dubbed the "Dance Hall Don Juan" re-

The breakthrough came tast year when forensic scientists and detectives at Partick police station hegan to re-examine the



Puttock: One of

77

case. They recovered traces of bodily fluid from Ms Puttock's clothing, and produced a DNA fingerprint. After checking 26-year-old suspect lists, officers identified a possible killer and performed DNA tests on close relatives. The genetic informa-tion from one relative proved to

The man detectives have identified used to frequent the Barrowland ballroom and visited the club on the night Ms Puttock's hody was found. Police will not reveal his full name but be is understood to have been around 30 years old at the time of the killings. He committed suicide in 1980.

Although detectives have established a link between the dead man and Ms Puttock, no evidence is thought to have survived to connect him with the two other murdered women, Patricia Docker, 25, and Jemima McDonald, 32.

After their six-month investigation, police will this week ask the public prosecutor in Lanarkshire for permission to ex-hume the hody for further tests. If the move is approved, digging will begin at dawn in accordance with ancient Scottish laws.

The breakthrough is a major coup for Scotland's largest police force and will help resolve one of Glasgow's most enduring murder mysteries.

In the first year of the police inquiry, more than 5,000 suspects were identified, but no one was charged.

The man they now suspect was the child of fanatical Christian parents, and grew up io Stonehouse before moving to nearby Newarthill. Hc married and had children but soon divorced. He served in the Scots Guards hut left to become a furoiture salesman in Glasgow, where he became a regular at the Barrowland. Clean-shaven, well-spoken and smartlydressed, he attracted little suspicion. But reports suggest he was a loner who gambled, drank heavily and had a quick temper. Wartime mystery: Buried aircraft in French field holds key to how flying ace was downed





Hunt for Bader's Spitfire leads to St Omer

RICHARD SMITH

A policeman believes he bas found flying ace Sir Douglas Bader's crashed Spitfire which has lain huried in northern France for more than half a century and may hold the key to one of the mysteries of the Second World War.

The painstaking detective work by Dilip Sarkar could reveal what brought down Bader's aircraft in August 1941? Bader helieved he collided with a German plane during a dogfight. As his Spittire plummeted towards the ground Bader who had lost both legs in a crash before the war - unstrapped one of his artificial limbs to bail out.

Mr Sarkar, 34, has discovered fragments of wreckage from the plane in a field at St Omer three miles from the spot where. Bader parachuted to the ground and was captured. The policeman has spent a

 year trying to trace the wreck- this being Bader's Spitfire hut age with Dr Bernard Marie until we find a manufacturer's Dupont, who works at a hospital in Lille. Now they intend to mount Operation Dogsbody -named after Bader's radio call sign - to recover the plane.

They want to restore the Spitfire in Britain and take it hack to France for display. "The Spitfire came down from 24,000ft so it could be

buried 15ft below ground," said Mr Sarkar, from Worcester, "Only five Spitfires were shot down in northern France that day and this was the only aircraft which crashed at St Omer. We've found eye witnesses

who saw Bader parachute to the ground and traced the people who helped him escape from the local hospital - they still live in the same house where they hid him. One man even remembers playing as a child in the crater where the plane crashed. "All the evidence points to

going fishing - until you've been you doo't know what you will catch. The fact that it's Bader's Spitfire is of paramount

plate bearing the serial number W3185 we will not be absolutely

"It's bound to be knocked

about a bit but the soil in the Pas

de Calais is quite soft. Its like

Mr Sarkar has interviewed British and Germao pilots who were involved in a huge doglight which led to the capture of Britain's most famous flying ace on 9 August, 1941.

Bader's "wing" hlazed the trail as more than 100 spitfires set off from Britain to attack the Gosnay power station in northem France.

At the time Bader claimed part of his Spitfire's tail disin-tegrated when he collided with a German aircraft which he had not seen. Records show no II was a terrible mess - a com-German pilot claimed to have shot down Bader and although 50 vards apart." Mr Sarkar has obtained prethere were many anti-aircraft hatteries in the area at the viously unpublished pictures of time none claimed to have shot

Mr Sarkar intends to publish a book in October about Bader's wartime Spitfire wing which will throw new light on the mystery. "It was an incredibly huge doglight with more than 70 German 109's in the vicini-

down a spitfire. German pilots'

combat reports are inconclusive

about how Bader was shot

tv." said Mr Sarkar. "Air Vice Marshall Johnnie Johnson wrote in his log book more opposition than ever before'. Johnnie said he had never been so frightened in his life. He said there were so many German aircraft in the sky you didn't think about shooting

plete maelstrom with planes just

Bader joking with German fighter pilots after he was captured. The Germans wanted to meet him so much they took him from the hospital in St Omer to their base to Audemhert, northern France.

Bader was entertained there hefore being taken back to the hospital from where he esand remained a prisoner of war until 1945.

Mr Sarkar has spent 13 years working for West Mercia police. He is based in Malvern and has has written five previous books on Spitfires and helped unearth the wreckage of more than a dozen wartime aircraft which crashed in Britain.

the film Reach for the Sky which tells how Bader became the most famous pilot in the Battle of Britain after losing both legs

"I used to watch my uncle make huge Spitfire models on the kitchen tabte and once I'd seen Reach for the Sky I was hooked," said Mr Sarkar.

"It's an awesome story because Bader had such pulverising dynamism. He was an extremely ambitious and charismatic man but his greatest caped. He was later recaptured strength was that he led by example - everyone tried to imitate his leadership."
Bader was born in 1910 and

died in 1982. He joined the RAF as a cadet in 1928 and was well known for his dare devil stunts and acrobatics. He had his legs amputated in December 1931 after crashing while buzzing a fivers' cluhhouse. He was inanyone down - you just wanted to get the hell out of there.

His interest in Bader came valided out of the RAF but to get the hell out of there. when at the age of eight he saw turned when war broke out. valided out of the RAF but re-

Ecstasy may have caused teenager's nightclub death

Police were yesterday sifting through records of hundreds of interviews they hope will shed light on the death of teenager Ben Nodes, who is believed to he the latest victim of ecstasy.

The 18-year-old collapsed and later died in toilets at a nightcluh at Aldershot, Hampshire, early on Saturday. Ben was with a group of four other youths who had travelled from Bournemouth to attend an allnight party at the Rhythm Sta-Police are investigating the

possibility that the five may have taken ecstasy hefore arriving at the venue. A pathologist will carry out a post mortem examination today. Officers interviewed 310 peo-

ple at the Rhythm Station on Saturday night and distributed leaflets showing Ben's picture.
Detective Chief Inspector Steve Watts, who is leading the to have collapsed.

go through the interviews before the death was being treated as we know how much information we have got. We will have a better idea once we have done

toilets at the club at 5am on Saturday were unable to save Ben's life and he was certified dead at the scene. The five youths had travelled

to the club to see the rave group. Fusion. Ben had heen studying tourism at the Bournemouth and Poole Coltege of Further Education:

His distraught parents were yesterday heing comforted at the family home in Boscombe, Bournemouth.

Ben went to the toilets shortly after 3am and locked himself in one of the cuhicles. Friends checked on him several times hut police were called shortly before 5am, when he was found Inspector Nigel Hindle said

heen taking drugs. "At this stage it is too early for us to comment on the cause Ambulancemen called to the

of the death but drugs will be a part of the investigation. We cannot comment further until we have the results of the post mortem examination," he said. Club owner John Searchfield said of Ben's group: "Ap-

parently, some of them bought ecstasy in the south coast area and took the tablets in the car hefore they entered the club."

He pledged to carry out more stringent checks in future. "We normally walk around the club and check the soilets regularly. We don't allow drugs in the club

"Nothing like this has happened before," he said. "All I can do is prevent drugs from entering and prevent people taking drugs in the club.

In Devon, a teenager was rushed to hospital after it was feared he had taken ecstasy at a drugs awareness rave party, police said yesterday.

The 16-year-old, who has not been named, was among 250 youngsters attending the party at Exmouth Pavilions. The event was the culmina-

tion of a drugs awareness day, organised by the Exeter Drugs Project. Police said it had been sug-

gested that the teenager, thought to have drunk a large amount of whisky and alcoholic temonade, bad then taken

The youngster, who is from the Exmouth area, was taken to hospital in Exeter and was later discharged.

He was due to be interviewed by police last night.

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Bearded Socialists told: if you want to get ahead, get a shave the career ladder," said a BBC equivalent of someone putting insider. "He's gone from hav-

Labour set of rail buy back JOJO MOYES

> New Labour is advising its parliamentary candidates to banish their beards, after polling revealed that facial hair can cost votes. But some Conservatives may actually benefit, according to one image consultant.
> In training sessions across the

country, TV executives advising Labour candidates on how to be telegenic are recommending that facial hair should be avoided where possible.

On this. New Lahour is apparently in agreement with Margaret Thatcher and Hillary Clinton: voters regard hirsute politicians as "shifty" and "radical". Research carried out in America shows that bearded candidates receive 5 per cent fewer votes than clean-shaven

You only have to look at Peter Mandelson (Labour MP for Hartlepool and aide to Tony

insider. "He's gone from having a beard to a moustache to nothing at all. He's saying 'look, I've got nothing to hide'."

But according to image consultants. Conservative politicians - and Prime Minister John Major in particular - may actually benefit from a bit of facial hair. Anthea Yamev of The Image Consultancy said John Major should grow a moustache if be wanted to add gravitas to

"I wouldn't advise him to grow a beard as he has a lot of shadow and it can look a little bit sleazy, a little bit Mafiosi. But a moustache carries a lot of different messages," she said. "If, like Mr Major, someone has a very large area hetween his nose and lips a moustache can look good."

Regular trimming, she warned, was essential: 'The minute it covers the mouth it Frank Dobson, shadow Envi-

when they speak." The safest option, she said, was definitely no facial bair at all.

Until the advent of TV, facial hair was adopted by most leading politicians as a means of enbancing authority. Gladstone, boasted distinctive hirsute growths and a recent attempt by Lech Walesa to lose his moustache led to nationwide disgust and concern that it would affect investment in Poland.

The last bearded Cabinet Sidney Webb in 1929. Labour is still the hairier party, with 33 of the House's 37 heards sprouting leftwards.

And disproving the idea that voters find all beardies untrustworthy, Rohin Cooke, the shadow Foreign Secretary, Blair) and his progression up has a negative message. "It's the ronment Secretary and David

Blunkett, shadow Education Secretary all have a generous helping of facial hair.

But according to Mrs Yamey. they may have succeeded in spite of, rather than because of their beards. "Rohin Cook's quite a small chap so a beard almost dominates him," she said. Disraeli, and Lloyd George, as "He's got quite a lot going on well as Lenin, Stalin and Hitler in his face, with those hig poppy eyes. He might benefit from having not quite as husy a beard," she said.

However, Ms Yamey warned that radical change can be dangerous. She knew of a man who had been advised to shave off minister in Britain was Labour's his facial hair and "nearly bad a nervous hreakdown. He didn't know who he was anymore and

had to grow it back. This goes for the Privue Minister 100. I think it would be difficult for Mr Major to grow (a moustache). It would make people wonder about him and would be a very obvious attempt at getting more gravitas."

'Intellectual Zorba' offers hope to mentally handicapped

LIZ HUNT Health Editor

A clinic in Israel run by a 74year-old Romanian, who pro-duces "miraculous" improve ment in mentally handicapped children, is attracting large numbers of families from

Professor Reuven Feuerstein. who has been dubbed an "intellectual Zorba" radiates an energy and humour that is hard for adults to resist and which children, many of them mentally

handicapped, find captivating. Every word is accompanied by an expansive gesture of his large hands but beneath his trademark heret, the large hooded eyes miss nothing. For some children three mnnths at the Hadassah-Wizo Canada Re-search Institute in Jerusalem have realised dramatic improvement, at least in the short

So what is the secret? Prof Feuerstein, a clinical psychologist and professor of physioloy at Bar Ilan University School of Education, prefers the summary of his beliefs attempted by the French newspaper, Le Monde: "The chromosomes do not have the last word," it said.

Human intelligence, Prof Feuerstein argues, is not im-mutable. He refused to accept a low IQ as an indicator of a child's capacity to learn but sees it as a "very potent artefact of



rier to maximise that child's potential for development, an attitude that has condemned

many of the mentally handi-



capped and emotionally dis-turbed to the "dustbins" of the education system. "I totally reject the notion

that a child's intellectual development is fixed and static," Prof Feuerstein said in a recent interview. The learning ca-

change, regardless of their age or learning difficulties. This is one part of my theory. The other part is that, for a child to learn, the teacher must interpose herself between the child and his world so he can interpret it in a meaningful way. In-stead of teaching content the teacher must extend, embellish and interpret the environment so that pupils build up an in-ternal model of the world. This type of mediated learning allowed changes in learning abil-

His methods, known as the Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment Programme (FIEP), have a wider application too; for brain damaged children and

pacity of all individuals can adults, and normal, healthy inchange, regardless of their age dividuals. FIEP has been adopted by schools and businesses throughout America, Asia, and Canada, aided by a BBC doc-umentary on Prof Feuerstein. Although the British educa-tional and psychological establishment have been slow to pick up his ideas, a charity. The Hope Committee for Children with Special Needs, is boping to change that

Prof Feuerstein settled in what was then Palestine in 1944 and developed his theories after working with children trau-matised by the Holocaust, and newly arrived immigrants. His motivation was simple; six million had died, we could not afford to lose one more, he says

dicated that thousands of these children were severely retarded and would require institutional care for the rest of their lives. He could not accept this. ... I could not accept them the way they were. I could not ac-

cept reality."
In 1965 Prof Feuerstein set up his research institute. This has become a Mecca for families with problem children. There are now 160 employees at the institute and satellite centres in over 30 countries. One goal is to help handicapped children live independent adult lives and many young adults with Down's Syndrome are now working as care-providers.

Church

'must

ordain'

priests

ANDREW BROWN
Religious Affairs Correspondent

The Church of England will

have to ordain gay priests open-

ly, according to a newly influential Synod politician.

The Rev Dr Jeffrey John, a former Dean of Magdalen College, Oxford, was elected to the Church of England's General

Synod at his first attempt last au-

tumn, and has now been elect-

ed to the Synod's Standing

Committee, which functions as

alternative to the hisbops' de-

"I don't think there is any

Union chiefs stake claim to Blair's 'big idea'

BARRIE CLEMENT Labour Editor

Tony Blair faces considerable embarrassment ovet a confidential minute which reveals that union leaders were making the running over the idea of a "stakeholders' society" long before the Labour leader laid

The document shows that the TUC held the first meeting of a "stakeholder task group" nearly a month before Mr Blair's "hig idea" emerged in a speech to businessmen in Singapore on 8 January.

Union leaders first registered an interest in the concept at the end of October in a brainstorming session which decided to establish the task

group. On 13 December, at the first meeting of the working party. John Monks, TUC general secretary, offered the opinion that the Labour Party was "cautious' on the issue and that such reticence gave unions the opportunity to lead the way.

The Tories will seize on the revelations as the most concrete evidence vet that Mr Blair is following an agenda set by unions. Ministers have already denounced the slogan as a strong indication that Labour wants a return to the corporatism of the 1970s. Conservatives point to an article by Mr Monks in The Times in which he registered unions' determination to be a "stakeholder" on behalf of

working people. The minutes of the first task group meeting report Mr Monks as saying "stakeholding was a political and sensitive issue, which had raised considerable opposition, and on which the Labour Party was cautious. There was therefore an oppor-

tunity for trade unions to lead." In a remark which shows how far unions have come since the days when socialism was the political goal, Mr Monks then led a discussion on "what kind of

capitalism we wanted". Roger Lyons, chair of the group, said unions wanted to influence the discussions on "corporate governance" conducted by Shadow Cahinet members who are to present a paper to the party's next policy forum on the subject. "People at work want their interests reflected and it is not something which is necessarily taken on board by the Labour Party."

It was the responsibility of TUC unions to work out how employees would be involved in a stakeholder society, said Mr Lyons, who is general secretary of the union Manufacturing Science Finance, one of the party's higgest affiliates.

Mr Lyons said union leaders first heard the idea in a book by Will Hutton called The State We're in. 'His analysis of the problem was very influential. hut his prescriptions left a lot to be desired.

The task group has arranged

a series of seminars on the subject culminating in a special conference of all unions during which the TUC's interpretation of the slogan will emerge. The annual congress in Scp-

tember will also spell out what is required from such a society, Mr Lyons said.

The document sets out the aims of the TUC group which will be to "highlight the role of trade unions" and promote the concept to employers, investors, political parties and the media. It will also seek to "develop an analysis of the economic and social case for moving to a stake-

Bottoms up for women's rugby as military muscle lends some crucial support



Up and over: A member of the England Women's Rugby Union team is helped on her way by Army Instructors at Arborfield Garrison, near Reading, as she takes part in an assault course exercise in preparation for a match against Wales on 4 February

Child bride case returns to court today

The fate of child bride Sarah Cook could be decided today as lawyers in Britain and Turkey seck a solution after the failure of diplomatic attempts to persuade her back to Britain.

Thirteen-year-old Sarah. from Braintree, Essex, is refusing to budge and in a public show of defiance yesterday, kissed the Islamic holy book the Koran to reiterate her love for her adopted country.

She had two weekend meet-ings with her husband, 18-yearold unemployed waiter Musa Komeagac, in the prison in Kahranmanmaras in southeastern Turkey, where he is on remand for marrying her in a religious ceremony in the town

three weeks ago. Her mother Jackie Cook, 37, and senior British diplomats had tried to get her to leave Turkey after the High Court in London made her a ward of court last can make a further order in the Sarah is a witness in Musa's case

Wednesday.
Today , Sir Stephen Brown,
president of the Family Division, will sit to hear a report from Essex social services and to see if Sarah has returned. He will make a decision after hearing from the Official Solicitor, appointed to look after Sarah's interests. Sarah's father, welder Adrian Cook, 42, may also be

called to the court. The judge

case or give the social services another seven weeks to com-

plete a full report. Any order he makes will not be enforceable in Turkey and the judge may choose to ask the Foreign Office to make official representations to the Turkish Government or ask the police to make an official approach to their opposite number. The situation is complicated because which has been adjourned until 15 February, when he could

he sent for trial at a later date. The local law association will meet in the Maras region today to work out the legal implications of the case, which is unprecedented. Mrs Cook is Sarah's legal guardian in Turkey, but not now in England, where the court has taken over the responsibility.

manding discretion to ordain whoever they think fit," he said yesterday. "Probably more than half of them have been ordaining and supporting positively gay clergy for years." In 1991, the House of Bishops issued a report claiming that homosexual practice was unacceptable among the clergy,

a sort of cabinet.

though it might sometimes be condoned among the laity. While Dean of Magdalen, Dr John wrote a pamphlet urging the church to recognise stable monogamous relationships among gay clergy. He was elect-ed to the Synod as a clergy representative for Southwark. which covers London south of the Thames. The Diocese of London, north of the river, has the highest concentration of gay clergy in the country, but the gay

subculture there is also tangled

up with hitter Anglo-Catholic

resistance to the ordination of The Bishop of Southwark, the Rt Rev Roy Williamson, was last year expelled from an evangelical organisation, the Church Pastoral Aid Society, after he praised his gay clergy in a radio mterview. Dr John represents a group known as "Affirming Catholicism", which he de-scribes as "Basically middle-ofthe-road Catholics in favour of

the ordination of women." There is no love lost between his group and the tradi-tionalist Anglo-Catholics, organised by Forward in Faith. Members of each accuse the other, off the record, of being homosexual front organisations.

Homosexuality is now the main battleground between traditionalists and liberals. The Lesbian and Gay Christian movement is planning a Synod debate on the subject, while next month, Walter Righter, a retired Anglican bishop, will be tried for heresy before a church court in the United States, after he knowingly ordained a gay man in New Jersey.

Sellafield worker contaminated with plutoni

Science Editor

A worker at British Nuclear Fuels' Settafield reprocessing plant has so much plutonium inside his body that he may have exceeded the legal radiation dose

The incident is sufficiently serectly to Government ministers. tions Inspectorate (NII) "statement of nuclear incidents".

But investigators are unable to understand how the man, who has not been named, came to have swallowed or inhaled

The plutonium was detected rious to have been reported di- analysed during June and July tast year. Further samples were

experts deduced that the man must have been exposed to the plutonium some time between January and June 1995. Faecal samples, however, failed to show any plutonium.

A spokesman for BNFL said the company was still investiin routine urine samples gating the incident but that analysed during June and July "we don't expect full and detailed results until April or

May". An interim report will go to the NII by the end of the month, he said, which "will tell us whether he bas breached the

dose timits or not". Plutonium is very difficult to detect once it is inside the body, even when enough is present to give the individual an excessive dose. Experts point out that if someone were to inhale plutonium dust, then a quanti-

ty totalling "something less than the size of a grain of sugar" would be sufficient to cause

of breach of safety limits. The worker is described by BNFL as "an experienced individual" and has been reassigned to non-radioactive dupending the final outcome of the investigation into his case. He had been working in the plutonium finishing plant at of internal contamination and

line which dealt with spent nuclear fuet from Britain's first generation Magnox reactors.

But a Sellafield spokesman said that he had spent most of his time in his office, in the control room, or at the operating face, which is isolated from

sources of plutoninm. No one else in the plant had shown signs

triggering plutonium-release alarms which could be related to the worker's exposu A spokesman for the NII said that plutonium existed in several forms which would affect

the degree of risk. If the plutonium were in an insoluble form, then "it can pass out easily and the prognosis

would be good".

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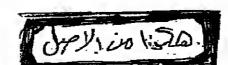


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'New' university chiefs paid more than old élite

FRAN ABRAMS and **GOUL HINDUL**

Vice-chancellors of some former polytechnies earn more than one and a half times as much as the heads of elite universities such as Oxford and London, a survey by the Independent has revealed.

The most comprehensive list of top academics' salaries ever compiled shows that some universities pay their most senior staff up to £129,000 plus pension contributions, while others pay as little as £66,000.

'New" universities in large cities such as Leeds, Manchester and Glasgow reward their vice-chancellors most handsomely. Meanwhile the vicechancellor of Oxford, Dr Peter North, earns a comparatively meagre £77.507, just behind the vice-chancellor of London. who earned £79,000 in 1994-95.

The highest paid is Sir Derek Roberts, provost of University College, London, and the lowest is Professor Keith Robhins of Lampeter, senior vice-chancellor of the University of

The league table of the 99 universities and colleges is the first to be compiled since controversies over six-figure pay-offs to two vice-chancellors led

University College, London

Leeds Met

Strathcylde

Oxford -

Brighton

De Montfort, Leiceste

to all universities being forced to publish the salaries of senior staff. It includes figures for all UK undergraduale universities, apart from four which have not yet published their 1994-95 accounts and which have not chosen to reveal last

year's figure. It also includes the main university colleges of Lon-don and Wales, though Buck-ingham, which is privately run, is exempt from the ruling. The average salary for old

and new university vice-chancellors is similar, at £94,428 for the old and £93,862 for the new. The heads of the larger universities usually earn more than those in smaller ones, but there are many notable exceptions. The vice-chancellors of Bath, Aston, York and Brunel all earn more than £100,000 with less than 5,000 full-time students, while the vice-chancellor of Newcastle, with 11,000 students, earns £81,000,

The most reliable way to a top salary seems to be via a knighthood. The average salary for vice-chancellors with this honour is £105,600, £11,000 more

than the national average. Ancient universities such as Cambridge, Aberdeen and Edinburgh all pay more than £100,000, though Oxford's low remuneration hrings the aver-

Among the highest-paid vice-chancellors

Professor Leslie Wagne

Professor John Arbutinott

Professor Kenneth Barker

Sir Stewart Sutherland

Sir Michael Thompson

Professor Alan Wilson

Sir Frederick Crewford

Professor David Watson

Professor David Ditks

Professor Roderick Floud Professor Richard Shaw

rofessor Robin Sibson

* V-C changed during the year. Figure gives new VC's salary, rounded up.

Figures in brackets are for 1993-94.

Figures include benefits but not persions, as published in 1994-95 accounts, unless otherwise stated

Dr Peter North

5ir Kenneth Greene

£129,162

£117,499

£125,000

£124,280

(£124,990)

£120,000 (£117,000)

£116.7274

£114.500

£114,000

£113,000

(£110,000)

£110,000

£77,507

£77,000

£76,000

(£74,000)

Among the lowest-paid vice-chancellors

(£114,000)

age for this group down to £99,800. Campus universities such as Essex, Kent and Lancaster payless, with an average of £85,600, while civic universitics such as Manchester, Sheffield and Birmingham pay an average of £96.600.

Some universities have chosen to publish their vice-chancellors' salaries in the past, but now all must do so after scandals at Huddersfield and Portsmouth over vice-chancellors' payments.

Although vice-chancellors' pay is not unusually high when compared with salaries in industry, it is for the public sector. The average annual turnover of a university is £78m and in some cases much higher. Edinburgh, for example, earned £127,000 in 11 months last year, including £19,800 in employer's pensions contributions, has a turnover of £215m.

David Triesman, general secretary of the Association of University Teachers, said other academics were underpaid and should have a pay review body like that which already exists for public sector professionals such as schoolteachers. Neither Sir Derek Roberts nor Professor Robbins was available for comment vesterday.

11,919

10,873

4,242

12,854

4,025

9.866

9,866

4.921

5.971

3,375



Wild side: A walker on the dyke that separates the sea from salt marshes at Keyhaven, near Lymington, Hampshire

Tide of destruction threatens lagoons

NICHOLAS SCHOON **Environment Correspondent**

Dotted along Britain's coastline are hundreds of hrackish ponds and lakes where salt water from the sea mixes with fresh water from the land.

They are called saline lagoons. The words conjure pleasing images of warm, languid waters but, with British weather and their surroundings of sea walls, shingle, scrubby pastures and housing, there is nothing remotely lush or tropical about

For biologists, however, their sometimes murky waters and silted bottoms represent one of the most unusual and threatened types of habitat in Europe.

Heritage \ of the wild

A committee of government scientists and wildlife conservation groups has proposed rescue ans for the lagoons and 13 other habitat types, along with 116

plant and animal species. The salt concentrations in their water can vary widely. Gales and high tides can push in sea water, raising the salinithen beavy rainfall can dilute it back down to near fresh water levels. There are some 40 plant and animal species found in Britain which are adapted to

these difficult conditions, in-

cluding insects, worms, molluscs and shrimps and two small species of sea anemone which are found nowhere else. One of these, Ivell's sea

anenome, has only ever been found at one place in the world - a small urbanised lagoon at Shoreham in West Sussex. It was first discovered there in 1973, found again 10 years later, but recent surveys have failed to uncover it; Ivell's may have become extinct.

Britain has about 300 lagoons, which cover only five square miles in total. By far the largest is the Fleet, behind the long shingle bank of Dorset's Chesil Beach.

In the natural state, new lagoons are constantly being

formed while old ones disappear under the encroaching sea or are filled in by reeds and sediment, turning slowly into dry land. But along today's heavily managed coastline, a combination of sea walls and development gives new lagoons little chance of forming, while some existing ones have disappeared

under huildings and car parks. Other threats are pollution by farm fertilisers, drainage works which affect the fresh watersalt water balance and the rise in sea level caused by the very slow subsidence of the south-

eastern part of the British Isles. The Solent coastline in Hampshire has Britain's biggest concentration of saline lagoons. defunct salt industry. This created a mass of shallow ponds, salterns, in which evaporation turned sea water into concentrated brine. Hampshire County Council has purchased miles of this shore to protect it from development, and increased the lagoon area by digging out some ground behind the sea wall and flooding the depression

with salt water. The biodiversity committee's rescue plan calls for at least half a square mile of new saline la-goon to be created over the next 20 years, for this would only be enough to keep pace with projected losses. It advocates putting conservation measures on a national footing, which thanks mainly to the long- would cost about £1.5m a year.

Fruit crop risk as bee colonies collapse

NICOLE VEASH

under threat following the collapse of bee colonies in the south of England which have been hit by a fatal mite infec-

Farmers in Kent, where much of the country's crop of strawberries, apples, pears and plums is grown, may face de-

pleted fruit stocks this year be- have seen complete colony col- ened and often deformed. Mr infected colonies, the disease is cause there are not enough lapse. "The first five years of this Cossburn said: "We are hoping virtually impossible to contain. bees to pollinate their crops. The varroa, a destructive

mite infection, has been in Britain for the past four years. Only five counties in England, and all of Scotland, have so far escaped infection.

John Cossburn, chairman of the Bee Farmers Association. said some farmers in the south

going to eradicate the mite but we hope a programme of treatment will control the infec-

tion." he said. Varroa mites destroy bees by infiltrating hives and infecting pupating bees. If the hive is not iped out by the infection, the hatching pupae are left weakthat fruit crops won't be dam aged in the south. In the spring we will be searching for new colonies of bees to contract to the places that have been the

With the treatment of varroa only partially effective and the failure of Government restric-

tions to stop the movements of

Alan Johnson, chairman o the National Bee Keeping Association, said the bee population has suffered a 30 per cent

loss over the past year. There is no doubt that some of the smaller fruit farmers could go to the wall, because there are not enough bees to pollinate their crops," he said.

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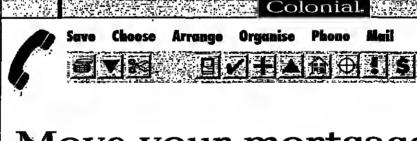
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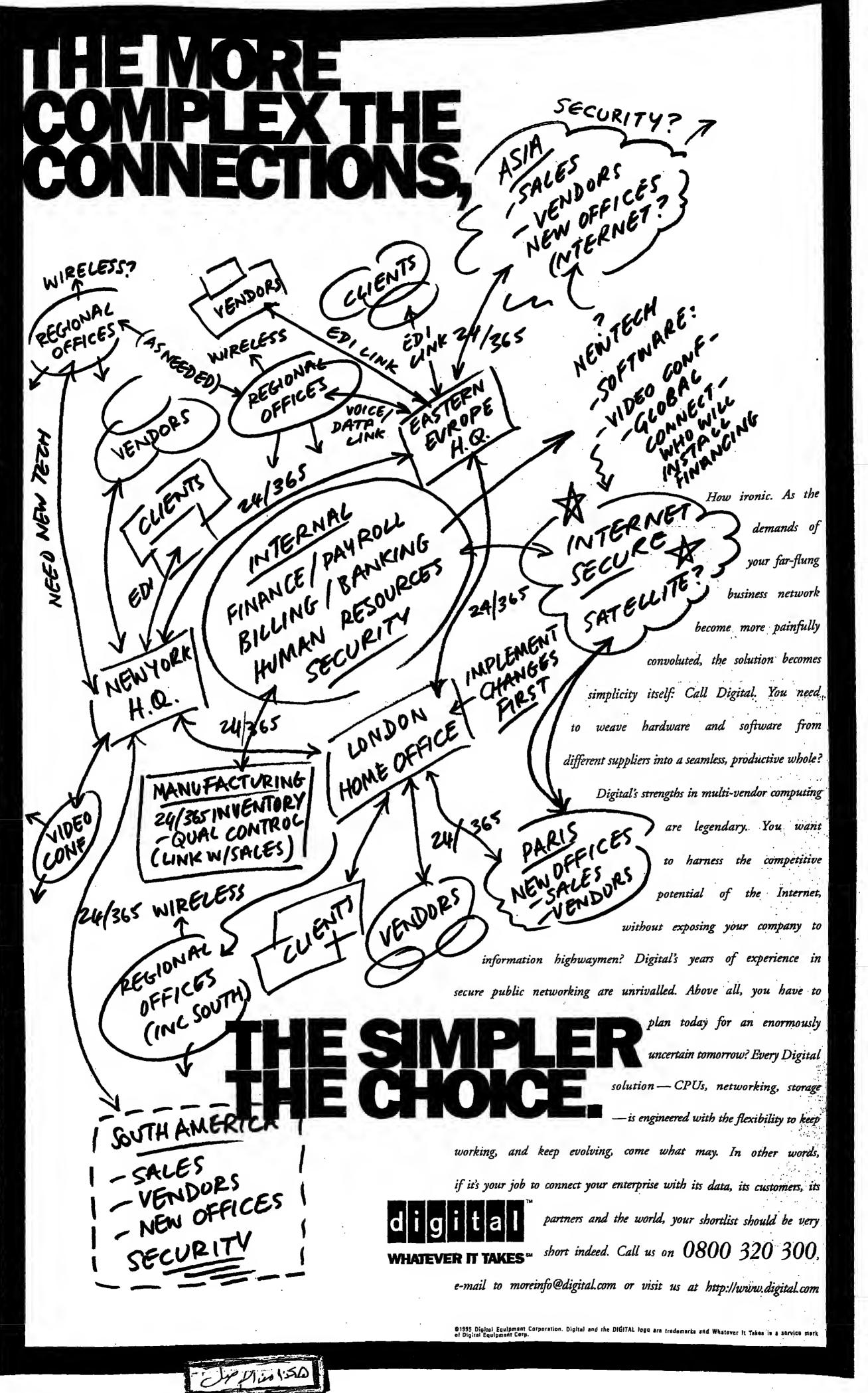
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Spate of rural murders blamed on gypsies

ALAN MURDOCH Dublin

Gardai investigating two murders in remote parts of Ireland are examining the possibility that a violent gang based in Britain may be responsible.
Two etderly men living alone

in Galway and Kerry were found murdered last week. Earlier this month gardai detained several people at Dublin preparing to board a ferry with a vehicle believed to

have been stolen from the home of an elderly woman in Co Tip-perary. The line of inquiry in-volves suspects in the Irish gypsy community.

The attacks on farmers came in areas where emigration and culbacks in the garda have left elderly people vulnerable to rubbery. The murder of a 44year-old woman last week in Milltown, Co Kildare, sparked a national outery and put presure on the justice minister Nora Owen to improve policing.

Last week's murders began with the separate killings of two farmers. The battered body of Patrick Daly, 69, was found dumped in a well near his 120-

acre dairy farm near Killarney. A post-mortem examination showed the bachetor died from massive head injuries. He may have been kicked and attacked with two blunt weapons.

Though there were no obvi-

ous signs of a hreak-in, it is known he withdrew a large

society six days before his body was discovered. He had been

dead since Saturday. The hody of Tommy Casey. 68, was found with his hands and feet tied, lying in a pool of blood on the kitchen floor of his ransacked farmhouse at Oranmore, near Galway.

The killings follow a series of rohberies in country areas. On 17 January an elderly Cork woman was attacked by two men in her home. In Co Clare condemn unreservedly those sum of money from a huilding an 87-year-old man was tied up crimes. I am appealing to them

and rohbed. The next day a woman of 8t was beaten by two men who ransacked her home. On 3 January there were sev-

en robberies of clderly people in the rural Midlands and West. Chief Superintendent Tom Monaghan said suspects in-cluded a number of members of the travellers' community. He said: "I know that the vast majority of the travelling community are law-ahiding and will

if they have any suspicions about who may be responsible to get in touch with us."

Detectives believe as many as 90 per cent of the robberies may all be the work of perhaps four groups of retated travellers.

Adding to the widespread concern over violent crime in the republic was the discovery on Wednesday of the semi-naked body of Joyce Quinn, 44.

who owned a grocer's shop at Milltown, Co Kildare.

Mrs Owen will present a

package of measures to cabinet to strengthen garda effective-ness and ease the shortage of prison space. If approved this will allow construction of a new prison in Co Roscommon, deferred last year because of

budget pressures. Moving segregated republi-can prisoners from Portloise jail, where around 60 cells are vacani, wilt also create more

Mrs Owen intends decentralising garda command by

creating four autonomous regional divisions. The regional divisions. The Taoiseach, John Bruton, last week complained of "an endless paper chase" of centralised

bureaucracy in the force.
With space for just 2,200 inmates, Ireland bas a chronic shortage of prison spaces, leading to widespread and controversial early releases. A liberal bail regime has also sparked anger over offences often com-mitted by heroin addicts awaiting trial or sentence.

Howard victims' hotline falls flat

JASON BENNETTO Crime Correspondent

ordaj

A national telephone hotline for victims of crime - one of Michael Howard's "big ideas" was used on just 238 occasions last year, it has been revealed. The victim helpline was launched in November 1994 by the Home Secretary to enable

victims to have a say in whether their attackers are released on parole or home leave. Eight people in the Prison Service are trained to answer the Birmingham based helpline, which costs about £12,000 a year to run. The Prison Service stressed yesterday that the holline team had other jobs to do

when not answering calls. Mr Howard, in a parliamentary written answer, has revealed they receive an average of less than five calls a week. Probation workers said the figures showed the service was

a hadly thought-out "sham" Even Prison Service staff have privately admitted the scheme has little or no practical effect, The service was condemned as soon as Mr Howard announced it. Lawyers, proba-con officers, prison governors and victims said is was "im-

practical", "unworkable" and "a breach of natural justice". Under the scheme helpline staff pass on information to prison governors. However, with more than 100,000 home leave and parole decisions made a year, most victims are not informed about any imminent release. Of those who did ring most were concerned about

sexual and violent offences. Harry Fletcher, assistant general secretary of the National Association of Probation Officers, said: "The hotline was announced as a hig idea hut was minimally resourced. It never had any real influence, as the infrequency of calls shows. The Home Secretary should offer real support to victims, not the

sham of a hotline. A Prison Service spokesman vesterday defended the helpline. "It is a valuable service to the families of victims and victims themselves," he said.

Housing shake-up: Suburban dream in decline as middle classes reverse decades of metropolitan exodus



Homeowners switching on to high life in the city

GLENDA COOPER

The dream of a qulet middle class life in a semi-detached in suburbia is becoming a thing of the past. After 60 years of drift to the suburbs, metropolitan life is hack in vogue with homeowners chasing the higher "fun factor" of the city centre.

Demand for city homes represents a major cultural change, says a report by a research group which predicts a shortage, particularly in London.

Geoff Marsh, author of the report, said: "People are choosing to swap their expensive, boring and uncomfortable commute from the suburbs ... for the efficiency and higher 'fun factor' of living as centrally as possible. London again is a trendy place to live and much safer than popular imagery would have you believe." The pattern is heing repeated across England and Scotland: "People are wanting to move back into the inner cities because it is perceived that there is more ener-

first-time buyers and the poor will suffer. Housing in London, particularly, looks set to become a "social and political hattle-field" over the next decade with a shortage of up to 100,000 homes, says a report by London Residential Research. While 153,000 new homes will be needed by 2006, only 10,000 units are being built each year.

serted the leafy and tranquil

suburbs of Richmond for Lon-

don's city centre: "The quality

chartered surveyors Allsop and

Co. recently moved from near

Richmond Park to a mews

"There were all sorts of rea-

Mr Oxley, partner in the

of life is so much better"

house in Marylebone.

But over the last few years the trend has been slowly reversing. The population of the south London borough of Southwark had seemed in inexorable dewas arrested in 1981 (when it had declined to 218,000) and From the 1930s on, the trend 1991 census recorded 227,000. opportunity.

CASE STUDY

sons why I moved", he said. "I'd

been travelling into London from Richmond since 1976 and

I'd gradually got more and more fed up with the delay. 1

was sitting in the car every day

for between three-quarters of an

hour and an hour just to get into

work and it was extremely bor-

gy there. There is a cultural change going on."

But without radical action,

But with radical action,

But with radical action,

But with radical action,

But w as city centre prices rose out of reach and fears grew about crime, traffic and pollution. each decade since 1951 until 1981, when its population was down to 145,000. It jumped 23,000 to 168,000 by 1991, Is-lington, Camden and Hackney all followed similar trends. "It's cline since its high point of 338,000 in 1951. But the trend by definition the middle class-es who are moving back. Before, you could not get anything under the £100,000 to £120,000 has been steadily growing. The bracket ... Now there's more

and very tiring in the evenings.

Public transport was no better.

you can walk to work. It's a lot

more convenient and it just

makes life easier. Something as

that in Richmond without rush-

ing as I would normally not get

"When you live in the centre

simple as going to the theatre sionals had been tempted to or cinema - it was difficult to do move to the countryside hut

The middle classes who are now live - the creative, media tumble home from the Caprice, moving back tend to be young couples or those with the mon-ey to educate children privatethe educational standards of inner-city schools still discourage less well-off parents.
In London the first step on

the property ladder is some-where like Docklands, east London, in a Barratt home.

The next step up is the more sophisticated Clerkenwell developments where what Mr Marsh calls the "crafty classes" it's the tip top location. You can

I have more choice. It's no

trouble walking home or catch-

ing a very quick cah. The qual-ity of life is so much better."

During the 1980s boom, he said a lot of well-off profes-

most moved back. "The prob-

lem is if you are travelling for of the countryside with ease."

pay £250 to £300 rent a week." The final target is Fitzrovia - the area around Tottenham Court Road in central London: "There's very little stock left but

er used to have time to go to

Richmond Park except at the

weekends. Now I have the con-

venience of living in central

London close to Regent's Park and at the weekends 1 can go

out to Richmond Park or parts

and design professionals. Next step up is Bloomsbury, Maida

Vale or Paddington where an in-

come of £35,000 to £40,000 is

necessary. "It's for the more es-

tablished professionals or al-

ternatively for the rich overseas

students who are quite happy to

rooms could be needed by 2000. But the report warns that social housing will continue to suffer without a rationalisation of housing associations. At present Move to quality street beats chore of commuting they are major players in the market -there are nearly 50 associations building 4,353 units in 114 schemes in central Loning. It was such a waste of time home before 7.30 to 8... Now a long time every day, how don - but as state funding dries much time do you spend in the countryside?" he added. "I nev-

saving £2 on a taxi fare.

London has the added ad-

vantage in its role as an in-

ternational city which is rapidly expanding. Tourism grew 11

per cent in the first five months of 1995 and London hotel rates

are enjoying such high rates of

occupancy that the London

Tourist Board says 10,000 more

up they will have to compete with the private sector. "Housing associations have found it particularly difficult to develop new homes in central London," the report adds. "This can only lead to even greater shortages of affordable housing in central and inner London. Leading article, page 12

IIIII

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WIN A PORSCHE BOXSTER

with THE INDEPENDENT Own one of the first Boxsters in the country

The Porsche Boxster or Project 986 has been perhaps the most eagerly awaited new car of recent years. Not yet in full production and not due for launch until September, we be a real head-turner. have managed to secure one of the very first Boxsters direct from Germany.

A genuine two seater sports car, the Boxster's retro body styling and fine detail combine for a visually stunning car. Add to this the legendary Porsche engineering and it is little wonder that this is one of the most talked about cars of the year.

The Porsche Boxster will be powered by a new six cylinder, two and a half litre 24 valve engine developing 210 bhp, driven through a new six speed gearbox. This engine is a major departure from Porsche's traditional air cooled power

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The production Boxster may differ slightly from the prototype shown here hut it is sure to

To enter our prize draw you must collect five differently numbered tokens from the eight we will printing in The Independent and the Independent on Sunday. Today we are printing



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9. The competition is open to residents of the UK and the Irish Republic. The prize will be as stated, with no cash alternative. The Editor's decision is final.

10. The Porsche Boxster should be available in November 1996, but is depen-dent on production dates.



ensures a smooth ride.

Du Pont drama: 'Lunatic' heir to chemical empire holds Swat teams at bay after murder on estate

Millionaire gunman under siege

JOHN CARLIN Washington

John Eleuthere du Pont, an heir to one of America's largest fortunes, was much loved by the far refused to give himself up. police at Newtown Square, the town neighbouring his 800-acre Pennsylvania estate.

An Olympic-quality marksman who counts an armoured personnel carrier among his possessions, he has provided officers with free instruction at his private shooting range over the years and bought them hulletproof vests. In the 1970s he was authorised by local police chiefs to go on patrol wearing a badge and full uniform.

Yesterday members of the same police department were laying siege to Mr du Pont's

David Schultz, a friend he al-legedly shot twice through the the advice of friends, Mr chest on Friday. Mr du Pont has been in regular lelephone cootact with the police hut has so

Since Friday evening 75 of-ficers, including 30 Swat team sharpshooters, have been surrounding the mansion, which is built in the style of Ancieot Greece and is believed to contain a substantial arsenal of weapons. Their orders so far lice spokesman said. "We will wait as long as it takes."

Mr Schultz, a wrestler aged 36 who won a gold medal at the 1984 Olympic Games, lived with his wife and two children in one of the 50 houses on Mr du Pont's estate. The two men were brought together by Mr du

the advice of friends, Mr Schultz had been training for this year's Atlanta Olympics at a vast sports facility - called by some visiting athletes "the Funny Farm" - on the Du Pont

Nick Gallo, who had known

Mr Schultz since 1976, said Mr du Pont had turned paranoid in recent months. "He accused Dave of crawling through the walls and spying on him in the mansion," Mr Gallo said in an interview with Newsday news-paper. "He even asked Dave if was masquerading as his dog. He thought Dave was the dog. The guy was a lunatic, and everyone knew it but did nothing about it - because of his

Mr du Pont, 57, has channelled most of his donations into



sport but he is also keen on nature, a passion possibly inherited from his mother, who used to raise Welsh ponies. The Delaware Museum of Natural

with the bearded Schulz

its treasures a collection of two the family is titled Behind the million sea shells, was built with his money.

The thing about the Du

Ponts," one family member

told Forbes magazine a few years back, "is that some are very, very rich, and others are just plain old rich." The man under siege, who with a fortune of \$46m (£30m) belongs to one of court and get someone the family's more modest committed but now you can't." the family's more modest branches, is the great-greal-grandson of Eleuthere Irenee du Pont, a Frenchman who fled to the United States after the Revolution and in 1802 founded a gunpowder business in Delaware. After the First World War, when husiness was so good that the Du Ponts became known as "the Merchants of Death", the company expand-

Nylon Curtain.) Martha du Pont. Mr du

Pont's sister-in-law, told the Associated Press that she had been alarmed for some time by his growing eccentricity. "It's so cause of the laws," she said. "You used to be able to go into

One opportunity to commit Mr du Pont was provided 10 years ago when he drove up to one of the homes on his estate in a tank, knocked on the door and asked the man of the house if he wanted to come out and play. In the absence of playmates he has often been snotted alone in recent years driving ed into chemicals, rubber and History, which includes among synthetic fibres. (One book on around the estate's grounds.

Gramm takes aim at the booming debt

RUPERT CORNWELL Manchester, New Hampshire

Three words sum up Senator Phil Gramm, the presidential candidate: guns, God and the budget. Guns of course means the National Rifle Association. over the years his biggest single source of contributions. God stands for his rigid anti-abortion stance, with which he woos the religious right. But currently the most important is the budget:

the one issue which may yet re-vive his ebbing political fortunes. Mr Gramm is not a man vho inspires instant affection. But one thing must be said of him: he has never disguised his White House ambitions, Almost from the day Bill Clinton took office in 1993, he's been working states like New Hampshire and Iowa. But nowhere is he running better than 15 per cent, and here he has sunk to single figures. Well-funded and singleminded, he was supposed to be the conservative alternative to Bob Dole. Instead, be must vie for the Christian and social right vote with the commentator Pat Buchanan, and is losing the radical economic argument to the upstart Steve Forbes.

Mr Gramm's stump style is a mirror of the man: unsubtle, persistent and uncompromising he peers at his target through thick gold-rimmed glasses before making his pitch in a thick Texan drawl. Other candidates drop hints about Mr Dole's advanced years. Mr Gramm goes for the jugular, accusing the Senate leader of being a trimmer, a compromiser whose word is worth no more than the odds of cutting a legislative deal in a back room. .

"Mr Dole cannot beat President Clinton, but I can," he argues - by appealing to conservative Democrats, just as he did when he switched parties in the early 80s, resigned his seat and then retained it.

Would that it were so easy now. Take Arizona, which is supposed to be prime Gramm territory and holds its primary on 27 February. Mr Forbes is actually leading there. Belatedly Mr Gramm has espoused the flat tax, which has catapulted Mr Forbes to celebrity, at an even lower rate of 16 per cent but offset by enough spending cuts to Gramm continues. Last week-preserve the balanced budget. Gramm continues. Last week-end he was in Memphis, singing The budget is his most pow-

erful card. The national debt. he says, now stands at \$18,700 per head: "If I don't balance the budget in my first term, I will not run for a second." Audiences listen with respect - hut without real fervour.

"I was a foot-soldier in the Reagan revolution." Mr Gramm loves to claim. But he is hardly a happy warrior. True, same result?



he has something of the Great Communicator's knack of a catchy phrase - but a hard, unforgiving edge as well. "People who are sitting in the cart should get out and pull with everyone else," is a favourite Gramm line on welfare. But Mr Forbes, the nearest approximation of Reagan in the race, blithely trumps him: "The genius of America is finding bet-

ter ways to pull."
New Hampshire is not choice Gramm territory. It should be. given its abhorrence of taxes and obsession with a balanced budget. But the Senator slighted it by campaigning in other states, jealous of New Hampshire's influence, which have moved their primaries forward. That probably cost him a precious



Phil Gramm: Unsubtle and

endorsement from Governor Steve Meirill, who has now cast in his lol with Mr Dole.

But the risk is finely calculated. Mr Gramm's strategy is clear: Do well in the largely overlooked Louisiana caucuses on 6 February to offset a possibly poor showing in Iowa, where Mr Dole should cruise to victory; then neutralise a had finish here with a win or strong second in Delaware. That, he reckons, should keep his candidacy credible until the primaries move to friendlier territory in the South.

And so, undeterred, Phil end he was in Memphis, singing gospel music at the "National Affairs Briefing" conference of Christian activists and committing himself anew to a constitutional outlawing of abortion. And be should never be underrated. "Yuck." is how Wendy Lee Gramm describes her first reaction to her future husband. Could his courtship of Republican voters yet yield the

Old foes join hands to bring 'last hope' to Bosnia

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY Priboj, Bosnia

Russia's special representative Leonty Shevtsov, had a blunt message for his troops deploying in northern Bosnia yester-day. The 60,000-strong peace implementation force I For, to which Russia is contributing a hrigade of about 1,600 troops, is, he said, "the last hope for the people here". But there is another message in the Russian presence: it is a chance for the Russian army to redeem itself after the debacle in Chechnya.

The relationship between the Russians and Naio was always sensitive, and the command relationships have still not been fully resolved. General Shevtsov said yesterday that Russian officials, including General Pavel Grachev, the Defence Minister, would be coming to Bosnia to work out the final details of their relationship with the Americans.

The Russians are laking over a sector of northern Bosnia under control of the US-led division based in Tuzla, although General Shevisov said important issues will still be referred to Moscow. The Russian bases lie north of the desolate "zone of separation" - a four-kilometre-wide strip separating the former warring factions, now totally cleared of weaponry and troops. Driving north from Tuzla, you encounter a US checkpoint at one side of the zone and the first Russian checkpoint on the other side. In the next two to three days, the Russians will take over from the Americans in the with a Russian double-headed

whole area. At the Russian base at Priboj. north of the zone of separation. we were met by Major Alexan-der Dementyev, 35, an officer in the airhorne forces and commander of one of the two main Russian battalions - each 400-

From Kostroma, north-east of Moscow, he had been in the army since he was 18, and served two years in Afghanistan. He had arrived a week before. on board a train through Hungary and into Bijeljina.

to show us around, when another officer rushed up. "Sir. It's

eagle above its Soviet-vintage star, was accompanied by Major General Staskov, the deputy commander of the elite airborne troops now responsible for peace-keeping. The Bosnia contingent all wear a badge saying "Peace-keeping [Mirotvorcheskive] Troops of the Russian Airborne Forces -Bosnia", with a Nato star cunningly coloured in pink and

General Shevtsov addressed you." he said.

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commander of the Russian hrigade. A huge man, he grabbed one of the soldiers and bawled him out for looking scruffy. But Col Lentsov, an Afghanistan veteran like Major Dementyev, was pragmatic - and shrewd. Asked if the Russians expected peace-keeping to be their army's main job over the next few years, he said: "It depends: if this goes well, everyone will say yes: if not, if

then no." We gave Major Dementyev a were well dug in.

there's blood all over the place,

peared and I found myself acting as interpreter. "I will show the Russian hattalion commander round our positions," said Capt Lightner, and asked Major Dementyev when he

Queuing for freedom: Bosnian Serb prisoners of war are transferred from Bosnian government custody to a French I-For truck at Sarajevo

airport. The government released 74 Serb prisoners from Travnik while the Serbs freed 76 prisoners from Foca

expected to take over.

When do you expect to take over?" Maybe three days," said the major, "but my troops are ready now." Capt Lightner explained: "We're building a new fire position here to put fire on that slope there. We have early warning devices we use to cover approaches that are difthemselves as comfortable as seen one possible they could. That's a Hummer, yes?" The Russians had tents three

layers of fabrie thick, and field "Like Arnold Schwarzeneghakeries which also provided ger uses, yes?" heat. The Americans had rigged The super-power contingents up weights in mineral water botburst into laughter. tles to ensure the doors were pulled shut.

"We have two mortars here. firing in opposite directions," said Capt Lightner. "There are mines here. I walked over there on 20 January. The local Serb battalion commander, Captain Mejor, told me there were no

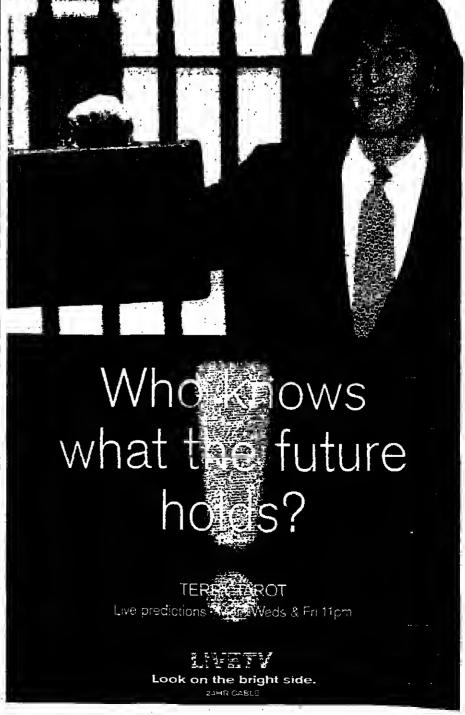
One of the features of the roads around Tuzla are the American "Hummers" - the wide high-mobility vehicles. Major Dementyev had not yet



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TMACT 19

Black Israelis riot over insult to their blood

PATRICK COCKBURN

l'amm takes, aim at the coming debt Thousands of angry Ethiopian Jews fought their way through police lines and besieged the Prime Minister's office in Jerusalem vesterday, during a protest sparked off by the revelation that the Israeli nutional blood hank has routinely destroyed all the blood danated by Ethiopians on the grounds

that they might have Aids.
The riot started when police and border guards, caught by surprise by the size of the demonstration, tried to keep the crowd of 20,000 away from the large block housing the office of the Prime Minister, Shimon Peres. One demonstrator's banner read: "Although our skin is black our blood is as red as yours and we are just as Jewish."

A hundred or so police tried to hold back the demonstrators, but were pushed back. Finally, the Ethiopians broke through. hurling a metal barricade in one side. A border guard tried to hold the line by firing clouds of tear gas from a special squirt

I was knocked to the ground by police recoiling before the advancing Ethiopians, and then helped up by a border guard. As he did so we were engulfed in tear gas, which induced coughing and retching and made the skin on the face burn like an exaggerated sunburn. The worst effects lasted for about 10 minutes. By the time I could see again the police had retreated. although an armoured vehicle with water cannon was ineffectually spraying the crowd. Many Ethiopians put up umbrellas and marched up the street into the car park in front of the Prime Minister's office, where the cabinet was meeting.

The discovery last week that the blood they donated was being thrown away has become a symbot of the rejection and discrimination suffered by about 60,000 Ethiopian Jews who were airlifted to Israel in 1984-85 and 1991. "Many of them felt they were part of Israeli society. That is why the pain is so intense," said Nomi Arbel, an Israeli who is not Ethioria but also intended the Ethiopian but who joined the demonstration. They feel hurt. They could at least have been



Peres: Office under siege by angry crowd of 20,000

The truth is that the officials of Magen David Adom, the Isracli equivalent of the Red Cross, responsible for the blood bank, believed the incidence of HIV was 50 times higher among Ethiopians than other Israelis. They decided to destroy the hlood, but keep it a secret. Ethiopians say they appear more likely to be carrying HIV because they are tested more often than other Israelis.

Mekonnen Zenaneh, a writer and hroadcaster who came to Tel Aviv from Addis Ababa two years ago, said; "They threw away our blood - this is inhu-

man." Looking around at the demonstrators he added: "Ethiopians feet that there is discrimination at every level, in education and in the military, that we are not equal. Even at this demonstration you can see it in the way the police are pro-voking people."

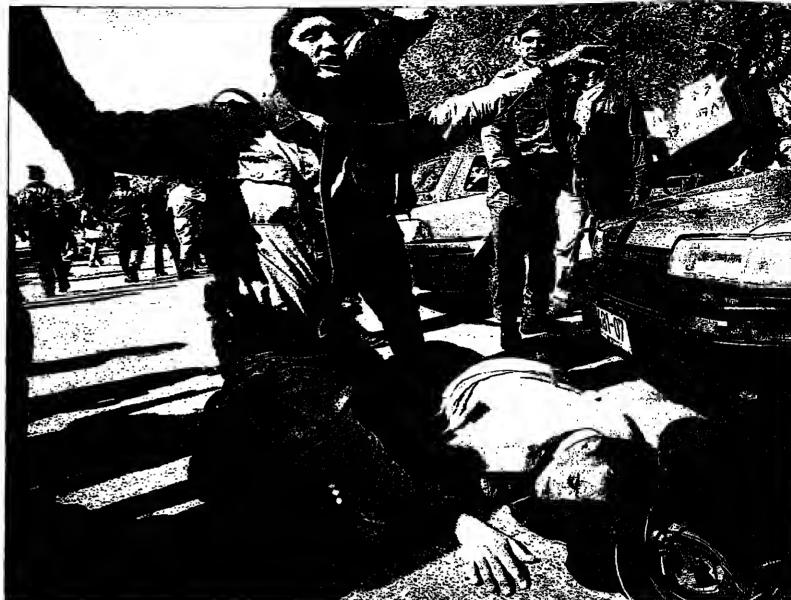
The police used enough force tn anger the demonstrators but not to deter them. By the steps of the Bank of Israel they hurled tear gas grenades and used water canon. In reply demonstrators hurled rocks.

"If we hadn't fired tear gas, they would have captured the Prime Minister's office and ministers would have been attacked by thousands of wild youths," said Arye Amit, commander of the Jerusalem police, although much of the violence appeared to be provoked by his own men. Last week the former US president Jimmy Carter accused the Jerusalem police of "deliberately trying to intimi-date voters" in the Palestinian elections.

The violence will only confirm Ethiopians in the belief that they are the objects of discrimination. Smadar Staspai, 17, a student from Kiryat Gat who went to the demonstration, said: "We are meant to be going into the army soon, but now we feel the country doesn't deserve it. We

want to go back to Ethiopia." Elisheva Darare, a school friend, said: "No, we love Israel. This breaks our hearts, but it is all because of our colour."

A third woman, Dedi Zudehir said: "In Ethiopia they hat-ed us because we are Jews, but they don't like us here either. They want us to work in factories. Twenty [Ethiopian] soldiers have killed themselves in the army hecause they were



Driven back: A policeman calling for help beside a wounded colleague as Ethiopian Jews rampage in Jerusalem

Mexico woos Britain with reform pledge

Latin America Correspondent

The President of Mexico will try to persuade John Major today that his country has at last achieved political and financial stability. Érnesto Zedillo bopes to win further British investment and a free-trade agreement with the European Union.

Mr Zedillo, who arrived in London yesterday after three days in Spain, is accompanied on his first official visit to Europe by key cabinet members and Mexico's most prominent businessmen, including several dollar billionaires. He hopes to assure European leaders and investors that multi-party democracy is blossoming after almost seven decades of virtual one-party rule by his Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), despite the fact that 1995 was Mexico City's worst year of crime and violence since the 1910-17 revolution.

The PRI is showing signs of

self-destruction, with reformers and technocrats such as Mr Zedillo struggling against the in-fluence of hardline "dinosaurs" who see their power, perks and pesos threatened by democra-cy and economic opening.

Many Mexicans believe the hardliners are in cahoots with cocaine barons and may have been behind political killings in the past two years. While Mr Zedillo is billed as a reformer and an bonest man, many recall

predecessor, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, a golden boy in world politics and finance circles un-

til less than a year ago. That was when Mr Salinas's brother, Raul, was jailed on sus-picion of being behind the mur-der of the PRI presidential candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio, in 1994. Carlos Salinas fled the country and it emerged that his brother had a fortune in banks around the world. Ran! is awaiting trial and Car-los is said to be hiding in Cuba.

of England Governor, and British businessmen, Mr Zedillo will insist Mexico is pulling out of one of its worst recession this century after the crisis that followed the devaluation and subsequent collapse of the peso weeks after he took office in De-cember 1994. Mexico came close to bankruptcy and debt de-fault early last year before be-ing bailed out by President Bill Chinton, with the backing of the International Monetary Fund.

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Rabin murder trial in chaos

Tel Aviv (AP) — His defence in disarray, Yitzhak Rabin's selfconfessed assassin cross-examined prosecution witnesses himself yesterday, arguing with police interrogators about hal-listics and the wording of his confession.

During an occasionally chaotic six-hour court session. indge Edmond Levy criticised 'igal Amir's lawyer and offered to belp him find new representation after a second lawyer resigned from the case.

Contradicting his lawyer, Jonathan Ray Goldberg, Amir extra time to prepare his de-fence, "You have had one told the court be willingly confessed to police to manslaughter, Last week, Amir admitted he shot Rahm on 4 November but said he did not necessarily want to kill the prime minister, only disable him and force him from office. That was registered

as a "not guilty" plea.

Mr Goldberg outraged Judge
Levy when he asked to postpone the trial, which resumed last week after a mooth, to give him

month and more to prepare," the judge responded. "If I were you, I wouldn't sleep at night in order to learn every part of the file. Whoever heard of such a

thing?"
Mr Goldberg, who moved to Israel seven years ago from Texas, appeared to lack a strong command of the Hebrew language and his mistakes sent his client and a packed courtroom into hursts of laughter.

This is the first of a weekly series of articles on people you have probably never heard of: rising stars in their own countries – artists, businessmen, entertainers, politicians, criminals - who have yet to attract the world's attention

Russian courts fame by reviving La Vie Bohème

Paris - Until last November, graphical novel, A French Tes-Andrei Makine was living quietly in the ground-floor equivalent of an artist's garret in Montmartre and teaching courses at the prestigious Polytechnique to pay his bills. The rest of the time he spent writ-ing, by hand, on single sheets

LOCAL

of paper perched on his knee. He is still living in his garret, teaching courses and writing on single sheets of paper on his knee. Now, however, he has to share his moderate-sized room with more than 40,000 letters, some running into dozens of pages, and his writing is more in the way of acknowledgments to his ecstatic and fascinated correspondents. If he chose, he could spend the next year travelling France to address admiring audiences.

The reason for the change is fect of confining him to France, Makine's Proustian autobiosomething be minds not a hit.

tament, the acclaimed winner of France's top literary prize, the Goncourt, which has caught the country's imagination in a spectacular way. More than 450,000 copies have been sold; the book's stylised French (his adopted tongue) has drawn envious comment from coenoscenti. and only the inside story of President François Mitterrand's illness threatened, before it was hanned, to topple it from

the best-seller list. Makine, 38, is a Russian citizen, or rather was a Soviet citizen whose papers were cancelled after he was given political asylum in France in 1987.

He still has no Russian passport, as the paperwork has not been sorted ont, but also because he did not really want one. He wanted a French passport. but the authorities refused. If national popularity qualified someone for citizenship, Makine would have his passport tomorrow. As it is, his lack of citizenship has the perverse ef-



Andrei Makine: The writer gained his francophone tastes from his French-born grandmother in Siberia

While Russian by birth and by his burty, bearded appearance, Makine is a devoted Francophile. One reason for his popularity, and that of his novel, is that he makes the French feel good about themselves. Save for the small matter of bureaucracy (that passport), he sees France as the acme of re-finement and cultivation.

For nostalgies, he embodies several traditions that seemed in danger, d not lost: France's place as a haven for artists in exile; a classical, some say archaic, French writing style; and the special relationship that existed between France and Russia for centuries, when education and status in Russia entailed immersion in all things French.

ple, "everything and everyone as though out of a novel".

Makine acquired French from his French-born grandmother, who helped to bring

was smitten by her tales, language and elegance, and his childhood dreams were all of France, a France, it turned out when he arrived in 1987, that did not exist. But the reality, he says, proved almost as enchanting. The colours, light, food and peo-

However much French friends try to persuade him he needs a country house, or a bigger flat, his new dream is to live like a 19th-century artist: "Td love to live in a hotel, with no possessions to speak of. But it's too expensive." On reflection he has second thoughts. "How, in this day and age, can you guarantee the person upstairs, or next door won't switch on their hi-fi and ruin your peace?" He is staying in his garret.

Mary Dejevsky

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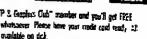


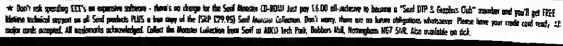












France weighs need for a final N-test

STEPHEN JESSEL

France is to decide in the next few days whether to call a halt to its underground nuclear tests, after exploding late on Saturday night its sixth device since re-suming tests last year.

The latest explosion was the most powerful since the first test on 5 September and took place at Fangataufa atoll in French Polynesia at 21.30 GMT on Saturday. It was the equivalent of 120,000 tonnes of high explosive and was set off a few days before President Jacques Chirac was due to leave for a visit to the United States.

Although criticism of the test programme has been less vocal in the US than in the countries of the Pacific Rim and northern Europe, there have been suggestions that Mr Chirac might use his visit there to announce that the sixth test was the last France will undertake before

signing a test han treaty. When he announced in June that France would renounce the moratorium observed by all the declared nuclear powers except China, it was suggested that cight tests would take place at France's two test sites in Polynesia at Mururoa and Fangataufa atolls. Mr Chirac later

said that the series might be lim-

ited to six. But he told diplomats earlier this month that the series would be completed by the end of February, apparently leaving open the possibility of

Officials said the latest test was designed to assess the safety and reliability" of France's nuclear arsenal. Reports suggested it was a further test on the TN-75 warhead for submarine-launched missiles. A decision on future testing will depend on whether Saturday's explosion has yielded sufficient data to make a seventh test unnecessary, but analysis will take

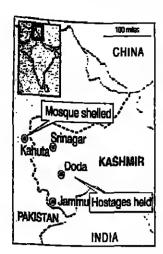
some days. The sixth test, like its predecessors, was condemned by Japan, Australia, New Zealand and other states in the region. French officials claim that denunciation of French testing has not been matched by action at the economic level in the form

a total ban on testing while the Defence Ministry was more concerned to promote the idea that the tests would ensure that France would remain a major

of boycotts or the shunning of French companies. They do admit that the resumption of tests was poorly handled in terms of public opinion, with the Foreign Ministry emphasising it was a prelude to

nuclear power.

Border firing raises Kashmir tension



MUKHTAR AHMED

Heavy firing raged along the dis-puted border between India and Pakistan in the Himalayan region of Kashmir yesterday, with both sides exchanging mor-tar and machine-gun fire for the seventh day.

At least 22 people were killed inside Pakistan when a rocket crashed into a mosque during Friday prayers, in what diplomats in Islamabad and New Delhi are calling a dangerous esdent Farooq Leghari said Pakistan would respond to the "The firing by the Pakistanis istan would respond to the rocket attack. India on Saturday successfully tested Super Prithvi, a long-range missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead. All of Pakistan's cities fall within the range of Indian missiles. Both countries are

thought to have nuclear arms. Indian officials said Pakistani troops yesterday opened fire on seven border outposts, injuring seven civilians. India claims that that fighting erupted when Pakistani troops tried to provide covering fire to enable Kashmiri separatist guerrillas to slip across the snowy mountain bor-

November when India refused to exchange jailed Kashmiri militants for the tourists. may have been to divert attention to push in more militants."

Militants who claim to rep-resent the Muslim majority in Kashmir are waging a six-year uprising against Indian forces. India accuses Pakistan of aiding the Kashmiri factions.

Meanwhile, India claims to have restored ties with militant kidnappers holding four West-erners - the Britons Paul Wells, 23, from Nottingham and Keith Mangan, 33, from Tooting, and an American and a German. Talks were broken off by the Al-Faran captors in hite, and we feel that must

The Independent has learnt that the militant kidnappers have moved the hostages. Police sources claim that the four were taken on a two-day march over the mountains into the more temparate Doda district, not far from the main Jammu-Srinagar highway.

In Srinagar, a police official said: The heavy snowfall and the biting cold must have forced the militants to enter Doda. Earlier, the American tourist was suffering from severe frosthave also forced Al-Faran to shift them.

All four captives were sighted by villagers several days ago in Kishtwar, a forest-covered region which is a stronghold for Kashmir seperatists. "They were exhausted but trying to keep pace with their captors," said one police official.

The Al-Faran group is said to be extremist in its Islamic views, and many of the kid-nappers are Afghan warriors who consider the Kashmir Muslims' battle against the primar-ily Hindu Indian security forces to be nothing less than a jihad, (holy war). The westerners,

now in their seventh month of captivity, had little idea of this vicious conflict when they set out trekking last summer in Kashmir. Their accompanying wives and guilfriends were freed.

Indian authorities, with British, US and German diplomats in Srinagar, pin their hopes on new mediation being carried out by a respected Kashmiri militant leader, Yassin Malik, from the Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front. He has backing from the major militant organisation, the All-Party Hurriyet Conference, which re-cently established links with a key Al-Faran commander.

IN BRIEF

Niger coup leaders incur French wrath

Niamey — Army officers in Niger followed Sierra Leone and staged West Africa's second coup of 1996, saying political squabbling threatened economic reforms. But they in-curred the wrath of France, the former colonial power and main aid partner. The officers, who named the Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-Colonel Ibrahim Bare Mainassara, as leader of the Muslim country yesterday, said the aim of Saturday's coup was to allow a fresh start, not to end multi-party democracy. But the French foreign ministry called for a return to constitutional order and suspended co-operation. President Mahamane Dusmane and the Prime Minster, Hama Amadou, rivals in power struggle, are in deten-

Hostage alert

Sanaa — Troops might intervene to free French hostages held by tribesmen in Yemen.
"This will be the last round of negotiations and if they continue to insist on their conditions we might use force to release the hostages," the Marib Governor, Abdel Wali al-Shamiri, said. Rewer

HK force groomed

Peking - The People's Liberation Army said it had com-pleted the élite Red First Regiment that will raise China's flag over Hong Kong in July next year. The force of ground, naval and air units will enter "at zero hour on 1 July 1997', Ma-jor-General Liu Zhenwu, its

Oleksy boost

Warsaw - A day after he resigned as prime minister in a spying scandal, Josef Oleksy was elected leader of the former Communists in a strong show of support on Saturday. The leadership post has been vacant since Aleksander Kwasniewski renounced membership in the Democratic Left Alliance after his victory in the 19 November presidential elections.

Socialists united

Madrid — In a strong show of solidarity, the ruling Socialists confirmed the former Interior Minister Jose Barrionuevo as an election candidate despite his indictment in connection with an alleged "dirty war" on Basque separatists.

Defiant Swazis

Mhabane — Swazi trade unions defied King Mswati's order to end a week-long general strike and renewed a demand for the lifting of a 23-year ban on political parties. The Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions secretary-general, Jani Sithole, aid the strike would continue until the ban was lifted. Reuter

Challenger tribute

Washington - On the 10th anniversary of their deaths in an explosion, the bravery and patriotism of the seven-member crew of the space shuttle Challenger "remain constant, as fixed as the North Star," President Clinton said on Saturday. AP

Monarchy a key poll issue for Keating

ROBERT MILLIKEN

Undeterred by his status as Australia's perennial political underdog, Paul Keating will set out this week to sell voters his plan to ditch the monarchy as part of his campaign to win an unprecedented sixth term in office for his Labor Party.

Even as the Prime Minister, who has called an election for 2 March, embarked on a gruelling five-week campaign, the pollsters were predicting the end of Labor's record 13-year reign in Canberra. An oninion poll yesterday put Labor 8 points behind the opposition Liberal-National coalition, which needs a national swing of only 0.5 per cent to sweep the government

Mr Keating himself has fallen behind John Howard, the opposition leader, in personal ratings after leading in opinion polls for much of last year. In the Northern Territory, the only place in Australia where betting on elections is permitted, bookies make the opposition firm favourites, offering odds of 2-1 for a coulition win against

5-4 for a Labor victory. polls said three years ago when Mr Kcating called an "unwinnable" election as Australia was emerging from a recession



immediate cover avallable.

which many voters thought was his fault. He went on to defy everyone and increase Labor's

Mr Keating's problem this time is that Labor has been in power since the early Eighties. and many Australians feel the government is suffering from fatigue.

Although the economy has recovered steadily, unemployment at 8 per cent is still disturbingly high, having fallen from 11.3 per cent at the time of the last election. Foreign debt has exploded to record levels. Strikes, which the government had almost wiped out, have hegun to re-emerge. Business leaders complain that the government has not been tough enough in pushing through its industrial relations reforms.

Yet there is little to choose between the two main parties in policy terms. The conservative Liberal Party, the senior partner in the coalition, has seen Labor steal and expand on most of its free-market economic policies over the past decade. During the campaign, Mr

Keating will push his pledge for a referendum to turn Australia into a republic by 2001, the cen-But that is precisely what the tenary of federation. Opinion polls suggest that this will be a winner. Mr Howard, an avowed monarchist, has been forced to drop his strident opposition to the republican cause, although he has yet to spell out how he

will handle the issue. The contest is likely to boil down to a test of leadership. While Australians do not like Mr Keating, they grudgingly respect him as a strong leader who has never pandered to personal popularity polls. And, while Mr Howard might be right when he said that "many millions of Australians are aching for change", it remains to be seen whether they are ready to swap Keating for the colourless. uncharismatic Howard.



Mandela preaches tolerance to Farrakhan

Louis Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam in the US, and Nelson Mandela, President of South Africa, stood side by side yesterday on the porch of Mr Mandela's Johannesburg house and proclaimed they

were like two peas in a pod. "All of the principles that President Mandela outlined [to us] we agree with totally. Islam is a religion which, if practiced, disallows racialism, racism, injustice, tyranny and oppression," said the controversial Muslim cleric after his meeting

with Mr Mandela. President ultra-nationalist and a racist. Mr ing. There was dismay in white "I have seen not only people Mandela said: "Our meeting has Mandela is widely regarded as liberal quarters as well as in with whom I agree [but] I have able to cover only those things that were considered to be fundamental. And there was no issue which arose on which there

was disagreement." It was a surprising result to an encounter between two black leaders who seem to stand for opposite viewpoints on everything from religious tolerance to black-white relations.

Mr Farrakhan's history of anti-Semitic outhursts and stinging attacks on white society have resulted in his being labelled a hate-monger, a black

tion has ensured the success to date of South Africa's democ-

ratic transformation. Before Mr Farrakhan even touched down on South African soil yesterday, the mere mention of his visit generated huge controversy among white South Africans, who feared the minister wanted to spread his divi-

sive doctrine here. The sparks flew when it was announced late last week that Mr Mandela had agreed to Mr Farrakhan's request for a meet-

such a controversial figure.

The neo-Nazi Afrikaner Resistance Movement said the planned meeting unmasked the President's "anti-white" sentiments. A Jewish student group accused Mr Mandela of being insensitive to the feelings of the largely pro-ANC Jewish community. But the President de-

fended his position yesterday.

"As the leader of ANC and as President of this country I have accommodated a wide range of views," he said.

heen very short and we were an almost saintly figure, a man tight-wing circles that Mr Manmet people and had discussable to cover only those things whose emphasis on reconciliadiametrically opposed to my own. I saw no reason to exclude

> Mr Mandels did not appear to pull any punches with Mr Farrakhan, and left the impression he lectured him on the need for tolerance.

> During his visit Mr Farrakhan intends to visit black townships, squatter camps and Muslim leaders. Most black South Africans seem to have supported Mr Mandela's decision

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Contradictions at the heart of Europe

Can the European Union survive the crippling cost of Maastricht and the rows to come over admitting the countries to the east, asks Perry Anderson

On New Year's Day 1994, Europe changed names when the dozen nations of the Community took on the title of EU. Was anything of sub-stance altered? So far, very little. The member states have risen to 15. Otherwise things are much as they were. What is new, however, is that everyone knows this is not going to last. For the first time since the war, Europe is living in anticipation of vast hut still imponderable changes. Three dominate the horizon.

iger coup leaden

The first is the Maastricht treaty. The core of the treaty is the commitment of all the member states, save Britain and Denmark, 10 introduce a single currency under the authority of a single central bank by 1999. This step means an irreversible move towards federation. With it, national governments will lose the right to issue money and to alter exchange rates, and will only be able to vary rates of interest and public borrowing within narrow limits, on pain of heavy fines from the Commission if they break central bank directives. European monetary union spells the end of the most important attributes of national economic sovereignty.

Second, Germany is reunited. The original Common Market was built on a balance between the two largest countries of the six, France and Germany - the latter with greater economic weight and slightly larger population, the former with superior military and diplomatic weight. Later, Italy and Britain provided flanking states of roughly equivalent demographic and economic size. A decade later, Germany's position has been transformed. With a population of more than 80 million, it is now much the largest state in the EU, enjoying monetary, and increasingly institutional and diplomatic, ascendancy. For the first time in its history, the process of European integration is confronted with the emergence of a hegemonic power.

The third great change has followed from the end of Communism in the former Warsaw Pact. Virtually all the East European countries, and some of the former Soviet lands, want to join the EU. As things stand, the population of these candidates is about 130 million. Their inclusion would make a community of half a billion people, nearly twice the size of the United States. It would approximately double the membership of the EU to some 30 states. A completely new configuration would be at stake.

Historically, these three great changes have been interconnected. In reverse order, it was the collapse of Communism that allowed the rements pose dramatic dilemmas.
The final shape of the bargain reached at Maastricht was of essentially for the bargain design. tially French and German design. The central aim for Paris was a financial edifice capable of replacing the unilateral power of the Bundesbank as the de facto regulator of the fortunes of its neighbours, with a de jure central authority over the European monetary space in which German interests would no longer be privileged. In exchange, Bonn received the security system of "con-vergence criteria" - in effect, dra-

ment of the Deutschmark. In a system of the kind envisaged at Maastricht, national macro-economic policy becomes a thing of the past. The historic commitments of both social and Christian democracy to full employment and traditional welfare services, already scaled down or cut back, would cease to have any purchase. This is a revolutionary prospect. The supranational monetary authority, elevated higher

conian conditions for its abandon-

It will be France, rather than Germany, that will decide the fate of European monetary union

above national electorates than its predecessors, will be more immune from popular pressures, it seems.

That is not inevitable, however. The project might create an equally powerful force moving in the opposite direction. Misgivings about what the kind of single currency envisaged by Maastricht might mean for socioeconomic stability are widely shared, even among central bankers. With nearly 20 million people out of work in the EU, what is to prevent huge ermanent pools of unemployment in depressed regions? The Governor of the Bank of England now warns that, once devaluations are ruled out, the only mechanisms of adjustment are sharp wage reductions or mass out-migration. Alexander Lamfalussy, head of the European Monetary Institute, has warned that if monetary union is to work, a common fiscal policy is essential.

Budgets remain the central battleground of domestic politics. How can there he fiscal co-ordination without electoral determination through a genuine supranational unification of Germany that precipit democracy? And this must embody set, not by politicians or technocrats Western leaders, John Major has en- ally designated as antechambers to nature. The most immediate effect a longer article in the current issue of ated Maastricht. These develop- for the first time a popular sover- but by public opinion. But on apply- visaged the ultimate inclusion of entry, have been signed by six coun- would be a financial crisis of heroic the London Review of Books'.

eignty in an effective and account-able European Parliament. It is enough to spell out this condition to see how unprepared either official discourse or public opinion in the member states is for the scale of the choices before them.

What will be the position of Germany in the Europe envisaged at Maastricht? It was not merely the hopes or fears of bankers and economists that accelerated monetary union. Ultimately, more important was the political desire of the French government to fold the newly enlarged German state into a tighter European structure. In Paris, the creation of a single currency under supranational control was conceived as a critical safeguard against the re-emergence of German national hegemony in Europe. No sooner was the treaty signed, however, than the opposite prognosis was heard: it would merely extend German power. Just this fear was the mobilising theme of the campaign against ralification of Maastrichl in the French referendum.

This referendum revealed the depth of the division in French opinion over the likely consequences of a single currency: would it lead to a Europeanised Germany or to a German Europe? The victory of Jacques Chirae in the subsequent presidential elections guarantees that the tension will continue to haunt the Elysée. For no French politician has so constantly oscillated from one position to the other, or opportunely reflected the divided mind of the electorate itself. The domestic course of the Chirae regime can only tighten already explosive pressures in the cities at the cost of its electoral credibility, on which that of its franc fort exchange rate also depends. The regime's slump in the opinion polls is without precedent in the Fifth Republic. An image of zealous compliance with direct-ives from the Bundesbank involves high political risks.

Nevertheless, it will be France rather than Germany that decides the fate of monetary union. Ger-many cannot back out of Maastricht. France can. There will be no EMU if Paris does not cut its deficit. The French political class Is still no surer that the single currency will deliver what it was intended to. Germany bound - or unbound?

Finally, what of the prospects for extending the EU to the east? On the principle itself there has been no dissent among the member states. It might also be added that there has been no forethought. For the first time in the history of European integration, a crucial direction has been



ing the principle, the three leading states of Western Europe have divided. From the outset, Germany has given priority to the rapid inclu-sion of Poland, Hungary, the former Czechoslovakia and more recently. Czechoslovakia and, more recently, Slovenia. Within this group, Poland remains the most important in Ger-

France, more cautious about the tempo of widening, has been less inclined to pick regional favourites. Its initial preference, articulated by Mitterrand, was for a generic association between Western and Eastern Europe as a whole, outside the framework of the EU. Britain, on the other hand, has pressed for the most extensive embrace. Alone of .

Russia. The rationale for the British position is unconcealed; the wider the EU becomes, the shallower it must be, for the more national states it contains, the less viable is any

supranational authority over them. In so far as the EU has sketched a policy at all, it goes in the direc-tion set out by Germany's ruling party, Given, however, that a widening of some kind to the east is now enshrined as official, if still nebulous, policy in the EU, is it probable that the process could be limited to a select handful of former Communist states? Applications for admission are multiplying, and there is no obvious boundary at which they can be halted. "Europe Agreements", form-

tries - Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria - and four more are pending (Slovenia and the Baltic states). It is only a matter of time before Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, Albania and what is left of Bosnia join the queue. Does this mean the British scenario will come to pass? Harold Macmillan once spoke of his hope that the Community, when exposed to the beneficent pressure of a vast free-trade area, would "melt like a

successors. There is no doubt that enlargement of the EU to some two dozen states would fundamentally alter its

lump of sugar in a cup of tea". Such remains the preferred vision of his

proportions. The cost of integrating the Visegrad quartet alone would mean an increase of 60 per cent in the EU budget, rising 10 nearly 75 per cent by the end of the century. There is no chance of the existing member states accepting such a burden at a time when every domestic pressure is towards tax reduction.
That leaves only two other possible ways out: either scrapping support to farming communities and poorer regions (which are composed of voters with the power to resist) or creating a second-class member-

ship for new entrants.

The conviction that EMU and eastern enlargement are incompaiible is entirely reasonable. It is shared by the unlikely figure of Jacques Attali, who regards the single currency as a valid but now lost cause, and enlargement as a German project that will lead away from a federal Europe.

Maastricht is unlikely to evapor ate so easily. But the hazards of enlargement do not just lie in the economic pitfalls. A still more fundamental difficulty would remain of a purely political nature. To double a purely pointed inature. In doubte its membership would cripple the institutions of the EU. Today the five largest states — Germany, France. Italy, Britain and Spain — contain 80 per cent of the population of the EU. but command only just over half the votes in the Council of Ministers. If the 10 ex-Communist applicants were members, the share of these states would fall further, while the proportion of poor countries in the EU entitled to substantial transfers would rise from four out of 15 to 14

This threatens institutional grid-lock. The size of the European Parl-iament would swell towards 800 deputies, the number of commissioners would rise to 40 and a 10minute introductory speech by each minister at a council would yield a meeting of five hours before business even started.

In such conditions, would not widening inevitably mean loosening? This is the wager in London. Yet the prospect of institutional deadlock might impose as a functional necessity a centralised supranational authority in which majority decisions hecome normal. Widening could check or reverse deepening. It might also precipitate it. These are the political quicksands on which the Europe to come will be huilt.

The author is professor of history at the University of California in Los Angeles and the visiting Jean Monnes fellow at the European University in Florence. This is an edited version of



Dream on, ye spires

A prize-winning hook must surely soon be written about a book prize. Aspiring novelists could do worse than study the fallout over last week's Whitbread Prize. One of the judges was Sir Julian Critchley MP, a



£25,000 of

flights and

holidays to

be won

champion of the hiography of Gladstone by Roy Jenkins, chancellor of the University of Oxford. Sir Julian wrote in the Daily Telegraph: "We wuz robbed," adding that the corps of lady novelists on the judging panel plumped for the eventual winner, Kate Atkinson, on the grounds that "we novelists must stick together.

elist he, revealed that Sir Julian had phoned him to lobby for Lord Jenkins, a fact 1 gather

that he is less than happy about. In the eventual judging, Roy Jenkins's Gladstone received only one vote - Sir Julian's, obviously - while Kate Atkinson's novel Behind the Scenes at the Museum, received four votes. Salman Rushdie's The Moor's Last Sigh received the other two votes.

What intrigues me more is the way I understand Sir Julian argued his case to his fellow judges. My judging-room mole tells me they failed to see the literary relevance when Sir Julian waxed lyrical about Oxford, his alma mater, and told them that a vote for Gladstone would make the claret flow in celebration among the dreaming spires. He added that a win for the Oxford chancellor would

be a fillip for the university.

Book prize judges of the future be advised. Whatever the merits of the books in question, you know your duty. Lie back and think of Oxford.

Wife in law?

Law Society, experienced some embarrassment following revelations that he was not mar-

for making divorce too easy. He now believes he has found a scapegoat in that age-old punch bag - Who's Who.

"I never said that Susan [Greenwood] was my wife," be confided at the monthly meeting of the ruling council of the Law Society last week. "and when Who's Who sent an entry form, I left the wife slot blank.

According to Mears, the reference editors wanted more (be'd said he had seven children -can you blame them?), so they looked up newspaper cuts which said that he was married. "I myself," he said proudly "never claimed as much."

The only problem with his thesis is that journalists who interviewed him when he attained the presidency of the Law Society (which is when he entered Who's Who) distinctly recall him referring to Ms Greenwood as "my wife". Perhaps it is just a term that lawyers use.

Ugh, blood

There was head-scratching at London's Imperial War Mu-seum when administrative staff realised that a scene worthy of James Bond - stuntmen carrying guns and wearing balaciavas were planning to swing down from the balcony and stage a raid on the place for the launch of Spycraft, an interactive espionage CD-Rom game. The problem? The Imperial War

attacked the Family Law Bill armoured memorahilia, hizarrely enough, does not want to be seen "glorifying violence".

"They asked us to remove the fake guns, and instruct the stunt men to wear woolly hats instead of balaclavas," says a spokeswoman for the game. "In addition, in order not 'to frighten' people we were asked if the assailants could have a struggle with pretend security guards and let the security guards win.

Goodness gracious

A fax, authorised by solicitors, arrives on my desk stating that rock'n'roll legend Jerry Lee Lewis is "adamantly opposed" to a new musical production about his life - Whole Lotta Shakin' - about to open in Coventry before coming to the West End. It states that Mr Lewis will back all efforts to stop the show, written by Todd Ristau, from opening to the public until "an acceptable

arrangement can he made". It appears that the problem stems from writers' rivalry. Charles White, author of The Killer (Lewis's official biography) is aggrieved that the Coventry-hased Belgrade theatre company was given access to his source material, but that Ristau wrote the play instead of him.

"Mr White has now written his own version, which will be Museum, home to all kinds of on in the West End soon," his

spokesman now says. One West End play about Jerry Lee Lewis is plausible; the idea of two succeeding sounds. to use the vernacular, like

great balls of fire.



Shakin mad: Jerry Lee

Hymn inside

Producers of BBC's Songs Of Praise were bemused by a special request from Sir Harry Secombe when he recorded an edition at Wormwood Scrubs prison, to be broadcast next Sunday. Sir Harry said he did not want to dn "Bless This House". Could this he anything to do with painful me from a prison concert Sir Harry ome years ago, when he cinded that tune? When he got to the lines: "Bless these walls so firm and stout, keeping want and trouble out," his captive audience burst into hysterical

Eagle Eve

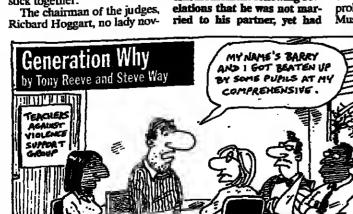




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The need for a great debate

A new week, a new initiative oo edu-cation. Today, Tony Blair will attempt to dispel some of Labour's post-Harmanite gloom by putting forward a cou-ple of ideas of his own for improving standards and choice in schools. Southwark Cathedral will be the venue for uoveiling new Labour thinking on getting the best teaching into "sink" schools, and opening up a "fast track" within existing schools for very able children.

Just a few weeks ago, such a speech would have been regarded with routine interest. Blair would have pronounced, teaching unions would have stated their concern at his words, a few column inches would have appeared in the more educationally interested oewspapers and that would have been it.

Not any more. What will doubtless pass into history as Labour's week of dis-Harmany has changed all that. For the time being, education has come to usurp Europe, the economy and rising violent crime as the lodestone of the nation's feeling of unease and underachievement. The attention that the education system is getting is both welcome and overdue.

But as the weekend's bouts of accusation and rebuttal, punditry and attitudinising have shown, we are in mortal danger of having the wrong dehate about schools. The British people are being invited to make choices between antediluvian positions on the questions of selection, comprehensivisation, class sizes and "modern teaching methods", as presented to them by contending dinosaurs.

The irrelevance of some of this discussioo is demonstrated by the fact that even the Conservative Party is not suggesting for one minute that the nation reintroduce the old 11-plus system of selecting the academic sheep from the goats. They are allowing some more selection to creep in at the margins, but they understand all too well that nostalgia for a lost era does not constitute a modern education strategy. To take just one recent example, how would selection assist in raising the woeful reading and mathematics standards of our

All the main parties, in their calmer moments, have ideas that may assist an improvement in British education. The Government was right to set up Ofsted to inspect schools, right to increase the power of parent governors, right to publish the examination results of schools. Messrs Blunkett and Blair are correct to talk about targeting resources on failing schools, correct to talk about parental responsibility and homework, correct to suggest that schools should be flexible enough to allow very able children to move up. All parties oow express a belief in offering a range of types of school for parents to choose between. As general principles, openness and accountability, along with parental involvement and flexibility, will serve very well.

The trouble arises when the debate turns to the motor that will drive our educarion system. The Conservatives, despite their championing of a limited voucher scheme for nursery schools, have utterly failed (despite being in power for 21 of the past 26 years) to choose between selection by the school and selection by the parent as the key factor. One is forced to the conclusion that they simply do not have sufficient personal interest in state schooling to take the electoral risks

of making up their minds. The Oppositioo is not doing much bet-ter. Fundamentally, the David Blunkett approach (which has the virtue of coo-centrating on standards in the majority of schools, not just the best ones) is statedriven. It relies wholly oo inspectorates, directives and agencies to improve things. The Liberal Democrats' main stated policy, on the other hand, is simply to spend more, without seeming to have any clear

idea of where and why.

This is not good enough. Once again, as in the early Forties, we need to come together and debate education with a passionate interest but a dispassionate argument. We know we are in a fix, and that our children and our futures are suffering. It is time to put party and prejudice aside and open a discussion in which the whole nation can take part.



* LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *

The comprehensive education of Bernie Grant | Whitbread: the judges' choice

From Mr Patrick Worms Sir: Bernie Grant's stance on selective education is a noble one ("Comprehensive education failed my sons, says Bernie Grant", 25 January). It takes grit for a politician to admit he was wroog and to publicly regret the consequences of his actions, even wheo doing so cootravenes the

official policy of his party.

Mr Grant knows from bitter experience how comprehensive education fails Britain's children. He will be applauded by any who regularly have to deal with its failures. Much more than Mr Prescott or Mr Hattersley, he knows what Labour voters actually want: an education system that stretches their children and gives them the tools they will need to prosper as adults. Most voters will happily accept, selec-tive schooling as the price to pay to reach this goal.

to the failed concept of compre-right certainty in the matter hensive schooling is serious enough to cost it the next election. I know that I, as a parent, will be unable to vote for a party that would consign my two young children to the intellectual dustbins our schools have become. Yours sincerely. PATRICK WORMS

From Mr. C. J. Davies Sir: Bernie Grant's attack on London's comprehensive schools is simplistic, as is his belief that sending his children to a private

school would cure all is naive. As a parent living in Haringey, I have seen my son attend state schools, with a hrief and unsuccessful flirtation with a private school for two years, up to the present, where he is in the final A-level year. In spite of constant cut-backs, his schools seem to have succeeded very well indeed.
I say "seem to" because I

recognise that education is a very complex matter, and no single factor is responsible for success, and success is not easy to define. Does Mr Grant take any responsibility in this process, or does be expect it all to be done by the school? Do his children want, or work for, the same success as he would like. Bringing up children For the Labour party to ding is a hit or miss affair, and downsmacks of arrogance. Yours faithfully, C, J, DAVIES London, N6

> From Mr Anthony Potts Sir: Bernie Grant is absolutely right in his common sense approach to the educatioo

27 January

dilemma faced by many pareots in the country. I have been a member of the Labour Party for over 32 years; I have been a councillor in London, a county councillor in Gloucestershire, and I am a serving member on Gloucester City Council.

In my view, the concept of a true comprehensive system is as valid today as it ever was. However, it is important that we make the decisions for our own chil-dren independently of the current system, which will take a long time to change. While I support absolutely the concept of fair and greater opportunities for all. the hypocrisy is to deny your chil-dren the best possible education

of the day. In the city of Gloucester we have four so-called comprehen-sive schools, four so-called grammar schools and one city technology college. Naturally the system does not work.

My wife and I would have no difficulty in sending our children to selective or private schools if we felt it was hest for them.

Well done, Bernie, I think most of Britain's backing you, including most Labour voters. Yours faithfully. ANTHONY POTTS Gloucestershire 27 January

From Mr Simon Tau Sir: The sniping at the Whitbread Book of the Year judges over the past few days is more than a little irritating. Commentators from AN Wilsoo to Andrew Neil seem undecided as to whether we were philistines, who had failed to understand the importance of Salman Rushdie to our literary culture as against an unheard of woman who had never written a novel before, or literari, who for some spiteful reason had conspired to deny Rushdie his right.

L for one, am not abashed to say that I voted for Kate Atkinson's Behind the Scenes at the Museum. That the Atkinson book was the best of the five was an opinion I went into the judging with; I was open to persuasion, and I was not moved to change my mind.

I do not know how the other judges voted, it was a secret ballot; but as a matter of record. 27 January

Launching the

millennium

two abstentions, including that of the chairman, Richard Hoggart. Of the seven, four were for Behind the Scenes at the Museum two were for Rusbdie's The Moor's Last Sigh and one was for Roy Jenkins's Gladstone. At the outset of the conclave, Professor Hoggart reminded us

there were seven votes cast and

authors, but I think we were already clear about that. Our task was to pick the best contri-bution to the literature of 1995.

SIMON TAIT London, SE22

that we were voting for books, not

My conclusion was that Rushdie is a significant writer who had not, this time, written a great novel, and that Atkinson had produced an ingenious and accessible piece of work which was the better book. Yours faithfully

An everyday tale of non-country folk

For 20 years no middle-aged, middleclass discussion has been complete without a "flight to the country" tale. Henry and Dinah tired of the dirt, crime and geogral aggravation of city-dwelling. They wanted their children to grow up close to fields and cows and other naturey things. For the price of their dingy terrace house, with its postage-stamp garden, they have bought a treasure two miles ontside Stowmarket. Dinah has restocked the orchard and mastered the Aga, Henry can get to work in the City in just an hour using the M11. The local school seems very good. Oh, and raspberries in Stowmarket are just £1.30 a punnet.

But oow, according to today's report by Loodoo Residential Research, Henry and Dinah are going back again. The country has palled, urban life exerts its fascination once more. Over the past coupte of years, folk have started to flock back to the cities. Why?

For a start, there is absolutely nothing to do. If jam-making and point-to-points do not grip, then time hangs heavy on your hands. Village life itself is a strange combination of nosiness and unfriendliness. The orchard takes a vast amount of work

and produces two rather sour apples and a wasps' nest. Dinah spends hours every day in the car ferrying the kids to school and to their friends. Henry reckons on getting caught up in at least one appalling traffic jam a week. And you can go off raspberries.

Is their return a good thing? Yes, and not just hecause it stops those Henry and Dinah stories. In the first place, the fewer people there are in the countryside, the better it looks and the more we appreciate it. The exact reverse is true for cities, which are sad, neglected places if too many inhabitants move out. The country ought to be quiet and tedious, the city should be crowded and vibrant.

It is also good hecause it is more optimistic. The urge to run away and sequester ourselves from our fellows is essentially antisocial. It is little wonder that the worst examples of long-running oeighbours' feuds occur where the people concerned have gone to get away from others. Cities, by their nature, require a tolerance and a willingness to ruh along together. That is why the city says welcome hack, Henry and Dinah, and the country says good riddance.

What teenagers know about sex

From Mrs Suzanne Wilson Sir: Does Peter Luff (letter, 26 January) really think that if 12and 13-year-old girls are given no advice on sexual matters by an accurate source, they will not obtain it from somewhere else?

Wheo I was in my teens, in the Seveoties, I picked up all kinds of information about sex from school friends (oaturally not the most reliable source), womeo's magazines, oovels and parents. However, come of this information made my friends or I want to become sexually active immediately. In fact, it probably prevented us from making stupid

The Dutch, and other similarly | Geocentric Views open-minded Europeans, have probably got it right and have fewer teenage pregnancies as a result. Keeping young people in the dark means they will probahly eod up making mistakes they will later regret. Yours faithfully. SUZANNE WILSON Londoo, E9

From Mr J. A. Gay Sir: Commenting oo Sarah Cooke (aged 13), my granddaughter (aged 14) said Sarah would know nothing about Muslims, because you don't do that until the third year. Yours faithfully,

JOHN GAY Kirtling, Cambridgeshire

And halt the traffic!

in ancient Greece

From Mr Julian B. Barbour Sir: W K Harper (letter, 27 January) is perpetuating an injustice by trying to prove the existence of a "golden heliocentric age" of Greek astronomy before Ptolemy put the clock hack for 13 centuries. Mr Harper claims that Aristarchus asserted that the Sun is the centre of the solar system and that the planets revolve around it. He may have, but all the extant accounts of what he said merely mention the Earth. There is oo word about the planets and oot a shred of evidence that Aristarchus had Copernicus's great insight that mobility of the Earth can explain - at a stroke - all the retrogressioo

loops of the planets. The first really "professional" Greek astronomer (ie, someone who attempted to set up proper theories of the motions of the cetestial bodies and test them by observations) was Hipparchus. His only great successor in andquity - 300 years later -was Ptolemy. Both were geoceotrists, but the outstanding lasting value of their work is quite indepen-

tric issue. It is not Ptolemy's fault that a few paranoid clerics and an especially vain pope at the height of the counter-reformation took a dislike to Galileo and tried to rescue the old Ptolemaic world view. Criticising Ptolemy for geocen-tricity is like blaming Newton for not having anticipated Einstein's relativity.

dent of the geocentric-heliocen-

Yours etc JULIAN B. BARBOUR Banhury, Oxfordshire 27 January

Holy smoke

From Mr George Healy Sir. If Peter O'Toole's idea of Heaven is moving from one smoke-filled room to another (Quote Unquote, 20 January), he cao go to Hell. Yours faithfully, GEORGE HEALY London, N1

From Dr D. A. Rothery Sir. Nothing that I have seen pro-posed for the millennium inspires

me. There are more worthy things than temples, opera bouses and parties. Despite our heritage of great navigators, we British have played little part in the exploration of the solar system. There is only one main planet that has not yet been vis-ited by a reconnaissance space probe, and this is Pluto.

Nasa has a Pluto probe in the design stage, which could be ready for launch in the year 2000, but lacks the financial resources to proceed. If the Millennium Commission were to stump up £100m. Britain could buy a controlling share in it.

If we were heavily involved in this enterprise it could provide a stimulus for educational initiatives, as well as a boost for British

mission. Moreover, the first space probe to Pluto will be remembered for a thousand years, and that surely is the point of the wbole thing. Yours faithfully, DAVID A. ROTHERY

science, throughout the 10-year

Department of Earth Sciences The Open University Miltoo Keynes 26 January From Mr Ed Jackman Sir: It has been stated that there

are over 1,000 mosques in the

UK. However, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the home of Islam, there is not a single church, yet plenty of Christians. Would not the Prince of Wales better serve the spirit of the millennium by using his influence from ooe royal house to another

 to redress this imbalance? Yours. EO JACKMAN Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex 25 January

Hard choices at 11

From Dr Mark W. Kermode Sir: I was dismayed to read in today's leader your recommendatioo for schools to "focus on music, the arts, science or sport". In 1994, my son took A-levels in chemistry, physics, maths, geo-eral studies and music. Now study-

ing chemistry at university, he is still actively involved in music. To have to made a decision between a career in chemistry or one in music at the age of 11 is absurd. Yours faithfully, MARK W. KERMODE Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics University of Liverpool Liverpool

24 January

From Mr Roland Anderson Sir: Nobody has yet come up with a convincing reason why children should be tested. How does testing help to raise academic standards? And why do we have this fetish about academic standards at the incredibly young age of 11? Our 11-year-olds at Summerhill have always spent their time as they pleased, and their lives haven't beeo wrecked. Yours faithfully,

Summerhill School Leiston, Suffolk Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@

independent.co.nk) Letters may

be edited for length and clarity.

Roland Anderson

Head of Humanities

Trees and traffic

From Mr Martin Hughes-Iones Sir. The Newbury by-pass is the lat-est excuse for the Highways Agency to trot out its tree planting statistics for new roads. The agency says that 10 trees will be planted for every one chopped down, but we submitted evidence to last summer's A30/A303 public enquiry at Yarcombe which showed that if enough trees were to be planted along the proposed route to take account of the greenhouse gases emitted by the increased traffic flows, 7,000 hectares of forest would need to be planted and not the intended 85 hectares - an area some 80 times larger than the planned planting Yours sincerely, MARTIN HUGHES-JONES

Tax slips

Tiverton, Devon

South West Green Party

From Mr P. J. Castle Sir: Just this week, clients of ours have received payslips from the Inland Revenue for interest on tax paid slightly late for amounts of 8p, 12p and £1.75. Regardless of whether such

amounts are ever settled, the cost of processing and transmitting all the oecessary paperwork can hardly be justified. It will be interesting to see if legal action follows for recovery if these demands are not met. Yours faithfully, PETER CASTLE Gilliogham, Kent

We'll drink tae Rabbie, but whae's payin'?

A pparently, the hicentenary of Burns's death has not run smoothly in Scotland - what should have been a great chance to promote a humper seasoo of Scottish tourism bas mo into difficulties over lack of money and unclear management. i can't say I'm totally surprised. After all, it is one of the charms of the Scottish character that, though great as individuals, almost anything they attempt as a concerted national effort runs into trouble through lack of management and lack of money. Witness every World Cup football foray, Bonnie Prince Charlie, etc. etc. I sometimes think that Sir Walter Scott can stand as an emblem for the whole nation, with his buge international success followed by his business collapse and gruesome final

financial ordeal. Poor old Rohhie Burns followed the same sort of path - an early back-breaking struggle, a short period of literary success and com-fort, then poverty, ill health and death at an early age. He was only 37 when he died in 1796 on July 21 - in fact, things were so bad that he reluctaotly embraced that most shameful of all professions, an exciseman or, as we would now say, a VAT inspector. Can you imagine, say, Seamus Heaney or Ted Hughes in an old notebook which I bave



MILES KINGTON

sending out your VAT returns? Well, perhaps you can. I doo't know the

gentlemen personally. Anyway, as 25 Jan approached, they tried to rescue things a bit in Scotland with the publication of a hitherto unknown and recently rediscovered poem by Robbie Burns. Things are always pretty desperate when this happens. For a start, people generally are unacquainted with the known and well-discovered works of poets, so they are likely to be unimpressed when someone prints out a new, very minor example of the man. For another thing, a suppressed piece of a poet usually has a good reasoo to be suppressed, and for a third thing, it usually turns out to be

fake all along. For all these reasons, I am somewhat besitant to bring to the public notice a poem I recently came across

every reason to believe to he a hitherto forgotten piece by Burns. I cannot prove it is geouine. What I do claim is that it is hard going, and makes use of disused Scottish words and is therefore highly likely to be a genuine piece of Burns. But I leave it to the judgement of my readers as to what they think of:

Twa Hundred Years On

What Has All the Money Gane?
When I am dead and live nae more I trust my fellow Scots will store

Some siller away To put inside a savings hank Or hide in yon brac's flowery flank Against this day. Aye, when I'm deid and put away, Twa centuries from this day, Let's hae a party! With folk that like tae write and

think, But better still, tae tak a drink - The literatil Frae all the world the folk will run Frae Russia and frae Japan (They love me there!) To celebrate my life and verse By getting fou, or even worse, Fall down the stair! When midnicht sounds, let all folk

(*Dialect word, probably meaning "to lie down on the grass until sobriety We'll hae sic a muckle bash As long as we have got the cash

We'll tak a glass in either hand

And then we'll maffick*!

And dance until we cannae stand,

That folks will say "Do you remember how ye and I Drank the toun of Edinburgh dry?" "Aye, I mind the day!" But what is this bad news I hear? What message fills my heart wi'

And total scouner? The folks that kept the party dosh Cannot be seen? Oh, jings, oh, losh! They've done a runner! Alas! the money's deid and gone!

And oow we cannae have oor fun

Or not a lot. In this, my anniversary year, I think the message's unco clear: Don't trust a Scot. My biceoteoary's run aground! We cannae even buy a round Of low-streogth beers. Let's hope they make a better go Of getting the alcohol tae flow In three hundred years!

Crossing the cultural divide to the South Bank

The Festival Hall's new writer in residence muses on his first week - after quitting the streets for a temple of high art

have lived in London most of my life, but until a few weeks ago 1 had never been in the Royal Festival Hall. I think I might have walked through it a couple of times, but that would have been a matter of minutes. Every time I say this to someone in the building they seem sur-prised, but the fact is that I have never had a compelling reason to visit the place. After all, I have never attended a live orchestral concert, or seen an opera on slage, and I have managed to avoid being present at even a single performance of poetry, dance or mime, which just about covers most of what the Festival Hall does. In effect, it is foreign territory

I come from that other culture, the one where people grew up watching television and Hollywood films, listening to the pop charts and following the sports results at the weekend. The nearest I got to the Festival Hall in those days was when my fifth-year class at school trooped down to an amateur performance of Macbeth in south London, and speni Macbeth in south London, and spent the entire time rolling Coke bottles which is a desk in the corner of a large office. The education departdown the central aisle to annoy our ment sits at a desk opposite.

English teacher. The social divide between the two kinds of cultural experience is probably sharper and more meaningful in Britain than anywhere else in Europe. Throw race into the equation and the gap yawns even wider.

So I am experiencing a sense of mild trauma at finding myself Writer in Residence at one of the temples of High Culture, with an office round behind the Poetry Library and an imposing view over the river.

I am not sure what I was expect-ing, but my first few days at the Fes-tival Hall have been full of surprises. The grand scale of the public areas sets up inflated expectations, and my first surprise is how small and crowded the office accommodation is. My desk is situated behind a partition in a sort of corridor running along the outside of the building, which I am told used to be a balcony until they put a wall round it. I am relatively fortunate, though, to have a desk all to myself. On the floor below is the literature department,

desks in the room representing various projects, and there must be a dozen people here, working in what seems an impossibly small space. By comparison with the huge vista of the concourse downstairs, the permanent staff seem to be squeezed tog-

ether in whatever space is left.

This first week is bewildering. It is the largest arts centre in Europe and they put on hundreds of events every year - music, theatre, recitals, literary debates, festivals, you name it. But most of the staff who work on arranging the arts programmes seem to be employed part-time, two-anda-half or three days a week. On the other hand, my suspicion is that they are putting in the kind of hours that you would in a normal five-day

It seems normal for everyone to be around for most of the day and the evening. They have all got their heads down, too. Maybe it is because they are mostly women. The proportion of men in this part of the building is minuscule – which I guess accounts for the atmosphere. I have never worked in a large organisation



'What do you do?' everyone asks me. I evade the question

like this, but after a couple of days l

am beginning to feel puzzled. Everyone is amiable. They smile a lot. They do not shout or even raise their voices. They are friendly, democratic, apparently nice to each other, considerate and team-oriented. After a few days of all this niceness, I am going crazy. Fortunately, a problem turns up halfway through the week when one of the speakers for a weekend event cries off.

A pall of gloom descends over my colleagues. The problem is that the event is sold out, so a number of people will be lurning up expecting to hear that particular speaker. Post-poning is difficult, because with a full diary it is hard to find another date at short notice. Substituting a simi-lar speaker is difficult, for obvious reasons. Simply cancelling is the worst option, because paying back the money would have an adverse effect on a fincly tuned halance sheet. The agony lasts most of the afternoon while the literature dep-artment chases a number of rapidly

disappearing options.

All this is within a context of difficult funding. There is the obligation for everything to make a profit or break even. That same day, the Arts Council announces that it is freezing increases in its grants for another year. The only bright spot is the building's collective pleasure at not being the subject of a fly-onthe-wall TV documentary. Wednesday morning huzzes with talk about the previous night's episode of The House. According to rumour, the Festival Hall was approached and

problem is," someone whispers to me, "there's no guarantee we'd have come out looking any better."
"What do you do?" everyone asks

me when I tell them I am the resi-dent writer. I find myself evading the question. My hrief is to support the practice of creative writing throughout the nation. A modest proposal. In my first days I am trying to work out what that means in practice, talking to creative writing groups from colleges, schools and arts centres who call in and ask me to look at their work and talk about the practice of writing. I begin to think about ways to take literature away from its critical grounding and back to narrative and what makes people actually want to carry on reading. 1 begin to sketch in my mind various kinds of activity round the themes of story-telling. Antonia, the head of literature, arranges for me to parucipate in a course for choreographers. I try not to think about it.

By Saturday I am half-expecting that few people would have struggled through the snow. But the literature department is there in force and a full house hears Christopher Frayling deliver a sharp, witty lecture on the correspondences between horror movies and the literature

from which they are drawn.

In the middle of this recital, a group of young men walks into the lobby wearing cardboard cheeses on their heads. They are led by a youth dressed as Captain Hook in marcon velves and lace. They turn out to be Brentford fans whose football match bas been cancelled and who had been turfed out of every other public huilding. They stand at the bar ving an impromptu performance. I have a sneaking suspicion that this must be a satire on performance art.

I end my first week moaning about the social isolation of literary circles in this country, and dishing out a lecture to Antonia about the need for writers to get involved in the great public issues of our society, race, nadonality, identity, crime. The programme needs out of this building, I tell her. She nods understandingly. On the way bome I feel guilty. I want to change things. But, dammit, I am in love with the

Talk of higher standards is empty while Labour is gripped by anti-selection ideology, says Stephen Pollard

Blair answer the Tory jibe?

ater Ioday Tony Blair will Lattempt to rescue his party from the quagmire into wbicb Labour has fallen over the past few days by arguing that the real issue is not selection in 160 schools, it is standards for 7 million children in 250,000 schools". It is perhaps ironic that he will say this in Southwark Cathedral, for it is the deplorable standard of Southwark schools that precipitated Labour's recent edu-

Blair will propose a "fast track" for bright children by suggesting that "accelerated learning" (where younger chil-dren are taught with older children if they are bright enough - a commonplace in the private sector) should be introduced into the state system. He will then promise that a Labour. recent decades. government would bring the best teachers into failing inner city "sink" schools.

The question is: are these just warm words, or have the events of the past week alerted Labour to the need to tighten up its education policy in the face of Conservative attacks and the inconsistencies in

Labour's existing policy'?

A week on, it is now clear that there are certain shared beliefs across the spectrum. Everyone claims to want to give all children a decent education. Everyone claims to want to increase standards. Everyone claims to have the solution to the problem of "sink" schools. Everyone claims to he against "social selection". Within the Labour Party, everyone claims to be in favour of comprehensive

But how do we get from here to there? How do we ensure that everyone does indeed attend a school where - whatever its locality or its particular specialisation or style - high standards prevail.

When it comes to dealing with these issues, new Labour is faced with an almost insurmountable hurdle. The party is comprised overwhelmingly of ordinary members who believe that education is primarily about social engineering (in Tony Crosland's words, that education should he seen "as a serious alternative to nationalisation in promoting a more just and efficient society"), or still worse, of mem-bers of the very educational establishment that has failed the country and its schools in

So even for new Labour, which was able to overturn the old Clause IV and which has rebuilt the party's philosophy into one in tune with the modern world, there is still one

no-go area: education.

Although all the evidence shows that a comprehensive system simply does not edu-cate children of all abilities as effectively as a system of selective, specialist schools, the party is unable to turn the

Instead, new Labour has to come up with a series of "ini-tiatives" which, like motherhood and apple pie, are good in themselves (who could be against high standards, for goodness sake?) hut which do not address the fundamental problem: the system itself is incapable of delivering what we require. As the new report

Rubbing it in: the Conservative Party chairman, Brian Mawhinney, and his party's poster exploiting Labour's discomfiture over the Harman affair by Chris Woodhead, Chief Inspector of Schools, will show later this week, more than a quarter of the secondary schools classified as "out-standingly successful" are grammar schools – even though they account for only

land and Wales. The bope is that our schools are so bad - the latest report from the World Business Forum ranks British secondary educational machinery as 35th

0.7 per cent of schools in Eng-

thought through selection. At the moment we have an insidious form of selection - which calchment area or private school your parents can afford. Parents with the opportunity to exercise this choice do so because they know their cbildren will better prosper for it. Surely the purpose of a party that believes in opportunity for all should argue that it is not

The only workable way for- on the academic 20 per cent ward is a system of properly though through selection. At That view bas changed. We now recognise that children have different skills, all of

which need nurturing. And the best way of nurturing a skill is in a focused, specialised, school. The largest ever survey of effective schooling, the 60,000-pupil report conducted for the Brookings' Institute in Washington, shows that pupils in all academic ranges, and just a tiny élite which should be with all kinds of skills, outper-

New Labour will wage war on low standards and failure. "Tough on failure, tough on the causes of failure" is the party's mantra. Yes – but how?

out of 48 - that Labour will be able to send their children to able to cover up the boles in its the type of school they wish but policy by lambasting the Govall parents? ernment that has presided over this, while delivering the soundbites that play well in the present, but which say nothing heen about wbether selection worked for the selected. That is a given. The argument has, about the mechanics by which rather, been about the spectre Lahour will deliver. "New of the secondary moderns. But Labour will wage war on low standards and failure, and is the success of grammar schools did not cause the failthe party of educational ure of secondary moderns. achievement for all. Tough on They failed because British failure, tough on the causes of culture at the time only valued failure" is the mantra. Yes academic education, so all energies were concentrated

form their peers if they are

The only argument ever

taught in such schools.

The argument has never made against those who advocate selective schooling is that "we don't want to return to a system where 80 per cent of pupils are regarded as failures". But that is a non sequitur. No one is suggesting a return to the old system. What the advocates of selection say is that a system which is good enough for all the countries the British left worships - Sweden, Denmark,

Holland, Germany, France. Austria - is surely good enough for Britain. Or do we as a nation not bave the wit to assemble a system of specialist schools that offer a multiplicity of provision?

But as of now, the fact that the evidence, and common sense, points so clearly in one direction is almost irrelevant. For so great is the grip of the ideologues that the prospects for change are, at hest, medium term. The hard fact is that new Labour will only be creating a rod for its own back if it thinks it can simply wish up standards. New Labour will have to come to terms with the idea that selection - or specialisation, if the euphemism suits better - is the only system capable of ridding our country of "sink" schools. It will bave to confront and jettison the culture of excuses that characterises Britisb state education today. Only then will the party be able to make good its

The writer is research director of the Fabian Society but will shortly become head of research at the Social Market Foundation. His paper, 'Schools, Selection and the Left', is available, price £8, from the SMF, 20 Queen Anne's Gate, London, SW7.

need more support from teachers.

As a result, in schools with large

numbers of children from homeless families the extra demands can

adversely affect the progress of all

pupils, not just those living in tem-

The Bill's proposals will make all

this worse. Homeless families will

face the prospect of one temporary

home after another. The cost to the

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Today the House of Commons will be asked to give a second reading to the Government's Housing Bill, which will affect homeless families all over the country. Under the Bill, homeless families will no longer be given priority in the allo-

cation of permanent homes. In future, local councils may only be required to provide temporary accommodation for 12 months. More homeless families will he turned away by local councils and forced to ake an insecure, expensive tenancy from a private landlord - the rent for which will come from the public

Homelessness exacts a terrible cost in wasted money and damaged lives. Families are trapped in expen-

Turning away the homeless

but how?

sive and overcrowded bed and breakfast accommodation, when it would be far better - and cheaper - to build permanent homes.

The experience of homelessness reaches into every aspect of life. It is more difficult for bomeless people to get a job. The stress of homelessness can lead to mental or physical illhealth. Many homeless people are not on the electoral register and do not even bave a vote.

But one of the areas where homelessness takes its greatest toll is in the impact it has on children. More than 50,000 children are living in tempo-

Chris Holmes

rary accommodation because their families have become bomeless. A report last year by researchers at the Institute of Education shows how their education suffers from this lack of stability.

Families living in temporary accommodation often face frequent moves - sometimes as many as two or three in the same year. Where a

family is put in temporary accom-modation some distance from its previous bome, children face the choice of long journeys or changing to a new school, perhaps only for several months. Some will have trouble finding a new school place, so they end up spending time out of school

altogether. Conditions in temporary accommodation, especially bed and breakfast, make it difficult for children to work at home. As a result, they fall behind - and some never catch up .

Homeless pupils often require belp in settling into school and may

family life and the sensible use of public resources must reject these proposals.

benefit in the first year alone.

The writer is director of Shelter

Harold Brodkey

The ambition endemic in American writers cripples talent as much as nurtures it. Harold Brodkey was a gifted writer who became virtually a caricature of the American rites

of celebrity.

Although what he wrote was consistently autobiographical, his work did not suffer from a public confusion of his writing with his personality - as with Norman Mailer Neither, as a very social member of New York's literary scene, did he opt for a reclusive life which, as in the case of Thomas Pynchon, paradoxically focuses public attention all the more on the writer himself. Instead, Brodkey became famous for what he had not written, and celebrated internationally for the novel that was to come.

Even without benefit of this most perverse kind of fame, Brodkey's life was unusual, his talent remarkable. He was born in the Midwest m 1930, and raised there by cousins of his mother after she died when he was two. The shock of this loss resulted in a two-year silence as a small boy that allowed him, as he later suggested, to develop an almost obsessive ability to take things in quickly: "I learnt to read in about 30 seconds . . . I was so abominably bright as a child there was no limit to my social acceptability."

The precocity was lifelong, but so too was the sense of loss fostered by his mother's death, and by the death of both his adopted parents in his teens.

From the Midwest Brodkey went to Harvard, then in the early 1950s moved to New York and married for the first time. He soon began to place stories in the New Yorker, and a first collection, well received, appeared

On the surface this all augured well; comparisons could be aptly drawn between the Brodkey of the late 1950s and John Updike, also a Harvard graduate and precocious contributor to the New Yorker. Yet. where Updike's career took a steady and upward path of accomplishment (Rabbit, Run was to appear in 1960), Brodkey's stalled. He continued to write stories, some of which appeared in a collection almost 30 years later, but he also contracted in 1964 to write a novel. Not even Sisyphus on his very first push uphill could have been so unaware of the true hurden being

The Runaway Soul, Brodkey's novel, appeared in 1991, but it was during the quartercentury of its intermittent composition that Brodkey became truly famous. His collection Stories in an Almost Classical Mode appeared in 1988, many of them very good indeed. "Innocence", an account of a sexually voracious affair with a beautiful young woman ("To see her in sunlight was to see Marx-ism die"), stands out for its candour, and the title story, about the death of his adopted mother, is made the more moving by the dispassion of the narrator's account. But it was the novel which literary society was waiting for; nothing else would

It may seem hard to understand why. True, Brodkey was already recognised as a talented writer of stories whose natural next move, in conventional American literary terms, would be the "big book" or novel. Also, as a New Yorker contributor living in the city, socially (and sexually) active, a powerful personality who was tall and attractive to boot, Brodkey was the natural object of the gossip and talk that make up much of a putative literary reputation. But neither explanation fully accounts for the fame this nonperformance grew into. It was, in the final analysis, as if America wanted a non-existent masterpiece, and one created by a writer (unlike J.D. Salinger) willing to talk about it.

Inevitably, when The Runaway Soul appeared, there was an almost universal sense of letdown. Little of it bad much to do with the merits of the book, for encumbered with such expectations the authors of the Gospels themselves would have suffered at the hands of reviewers. Only Salman Rushdie stood out prominently as a Brodkey defender, pointing out the many richnesses of the author's prose, accepting its many longueurs (The Runaway Soul is over 800 pages long), while defending its "huge carnival of

Certainly the strength and themes of Brodkey's stories recur in the longer work. The dissection of sexual development and emergence of bisexuality shock less than they would have at the time of the book's commissioning, but may be more interesting for that. The details of ordinary Midwestern life are in-cessantly conveyed, as if the

miniaturist preoccupations of Nicholson Baker have been put in larger hands. The Proustian conviction that linear narratives are inauthentic tools for capturing life makes for confusing juxtapositions, but sometimes powerful ones. The weakest element in the novel is the unevenness of its prose. When straightforward and descriptive it is effective:

Then you come to another sunny dis-Then you come to another sumy dis-trict - puritanical little gardens, gar-den beds, dry-looking rural lawns, clean ditches alongside the road, and fewer trees, and those are lopped or pruned or solitary in wide spaces. Nothing is hidden. A single tractor moves at the far end of a dipping and swelling field. A moronic boy sits in a kitchen chair with a doll and near him a sad women is poeling morators. im a sad woman is peeling potatoes wer a wash tub.

When abstract and selfconsciously intelligent it is ponderous, pretentious:

ponderous, pretentious:
It is somehow part of the substance, the very quality of my mind, to conceive of goodness as absolute, unchanging as solid and philosophical, and of evil as cloudy, interpretable, changeable, capable of redemption, worldly, temporal. But that is the mind's doing. That conception hardly matches actuality or my own thought but is a shadowy thing, an absolutist notion of the matter... traditional ... since goodness is temporal, too, is as cloudy, interpretable, changeable, as ridden by storyness. The hostile reaction to his

novel was devastating to Brodkey; in bleaker moments he suggested it may have brought on the full-blown Aids he died from. Curiously, however, it also seems to have liberated him as a writer, and another novel. Profane Friendship, was published in 1994. Again, it did not enjoy good reviews but was sufficiently distinctive to suggest a considerable talent at work. As his illness took hold, Brodkey continued to write, including two powerful essays on his own Aids for the New Yorker. These are notable less for their revelations about his homosexual past than for the mix of personal preoccupation and detachment while facing death: "It's my turn to die," he wrote,
"I can see that that is interesting to some people, but not that

it is tragic." The self-absorption found in all Brodkey's work is present, but the self-importance is now moderated, At last, Brodkey's reputation - whatever its fortunes to come - will be for what he wrote, not for what he failed



I first met Harold Brodkey in 1991 when, in company with his wife Ellen Schwamm, he came to London to promote The Runaway Soul, writes Gilbert Adair. As one of the very few British critics to have praised the novel - as, apparently, one of the very few critics to have read it from its first page to its last -1 was rung up by The Late Show, which was (rather desperately, was my impression) looking for someone to interview him. I accepted, hastened along to meet him at Television Centre and almost instantly

I say almost, for Brodkey's charm was of the so-called "disarming" kind which normally has one reaching for one's revolver. How can he - I won-dered suspiciously - be so ingratiating to a total stranger and really mean it? Surely it has to be a pose? Yet it soon became evident that Harold Brodkey charmed as he breathed; and on our subsequent encounters in New York he passed every tra-ditional test of sincerity and af-

fell under his spell.

fection. If I were delayed returning to my hotel for an ap-pointment with him, I would find him sitting patiently in the lobby. If I left a message on his answering machine, the call would infallibly be returned. If we had a dinner date, he would be in the restaurant before me, He was, to be sure, an incurable narcissist - but, considering his behavioural elegance and conversational brilliance, who could

The last time I saw him he

was already dying. I rode up in the elevator of his West 88th Street apartment block bracing myself for the shock that I expected to receive from his phys-ical deterioration. I ought to have known better; apart from a few extra grey circles around his eyes, he looked terrific. It was typical of Brodkey that, at that stage of his condition at least, he contrived to be terminally ill in the photogenic way that movie characters are. Although he had clearly been

pained by The Runaway Soul's less than unanimous critical

hlame him?

faith in its enduring qualities. Nor had L In our conversation that afternoon I told him thought his novel such a giant, haggy monster of genius, it had had the effect of obscuring its own context, thereby frustrating those reviewers who can only function by "contextualising" works of hierature. "Yes," he sighed, "I suppose I'm what's

called a near-great writer." In

that "near", in that exquisitely

lucid qualification of his own

Brodkey.

vanity, there was all of Harold

reception, he had never lost

Aaron Roy Weintraub (Harold Roy Brodkey), writer: born Staunton, Illinois 25 October 1930; author of First Love and Other Sorrows 1958 (revised edition 1986), Women and Angels 1985, Stories in an Almost Classical Mode 1988, The Run-away Soul 1991, Profane Friendship 1994: married 1952 Joanna Brown (one daughter; marriage dissolved 1962), 1980

Ellen Schwamm; died New York 26 January 1996.

Olga Havlová

"One of life's unshakeable cer- in accounts after suffering an tainties is Ofga. We've known one another for 33 years and for 30 years we've lived together through the possible and the impossible "wrote Václav Havel Havel's 143 letters to Olga from prison (published in English as Letters to Olga in 1988) give a moving insight into the depth of nuntual support they offered one another during the grey and soul-destroying period of "normalisation" in the face of almost constant persecution by the authorities.

Olga Havlová never lived in the shadow of her husband. During their dissident life in the Eighties, she was one of the founder members of the samizdat Original Video Journal, which tried to capture the reality of life in Czechoslovakia on film to show to the outside world. When Havel became President after the Velvet Revolution, she shrugged off the role of "First Lady", taking it for grant-ed that she abould continue to do her own work in ber own right. Rallying the support of other former dissidents, she set up the "Good Will Foundation" in 1990 to support the mentally and physically dis-abled, working from her phi-losophy of a civic society built

But at the same time she remained a private person, astonishingly untouched by her position in the public realm and always allowing herself time to reflect and gather strength. "I sometimes feel guilty about keeping space for myself at whatever cost," she said in

Olga Havlová had a tough preparation for life. In the days of her childhood in the working-class Prague suburb of Zizkov, she learnt to survive. Her parents divorced when she was six, and from an early age she knew both the unlimited freedom of the city and the re-sponsibility of family, helping to bring up her elder sister's five children. She served an apprenticeship as a stocking-mender for the Bata shoe 1964 Václav Have. company, and went on to work 27 January 1996.

Dev Kanta Borooah, politician, died 28 January, aged 82. President of India's governing Congress: party. 1973-77. Coined the slogan 'India's India's and Indira is India" in 1975, when Indira Gandhi as prime minis-

ter imposed two years of

giance to that sane and elegant

national emergency.

injury on a cutting machine. It was through a friend that she met her husband in the famous Café Siavia m Prague, and from the start the couple found they had much in common, in particular a love for the theatre. When Havel was working as a scene-shifter and later dramatist at the Theatre on the Balustrade, Olga found work in the same theatre, and Havel often consulted her in his work. "Sometimes Václav wakes me in the night and reads me a scene he's just written. We've always done everything together."

In the five years of her work in the Good Will Foundation. Havlová raised the equivalent of £15m for causes varying from projects to break down the isolation of the mentally dis-



abled from society, to summer camps for asthmatic children from the polluted cities of northern Bohemia. Her approach to the foundation reflected her approach to life in

You should never give up just because some bureaucrat says that there is no money." she said of her work last autumn. "You should ask, why is there no money? - and then keep 'pestering' until there is.'

David Vanghan

Olga Splichalova, political activist and charities campaigner: born Prague 11 July 1933; married 1964 Václav Havel; died Prague

David Greville, eighth Earl of Warwick, died Mijas, Spain 20 January, aged 61. In 1978 sold Warwick Castle to Madame Tussauds for £5m. Sandor Iharos, middle distance runner, died Budapest 24 January, aged 65. Set 11 world records in 1955-56.

Commander Hugh Hodgkinson

Hugh Hodgkinson became a public-school headmaster after he had already completed one career with distinction.

He was born in 1912 and educated at the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth. He was then sent to South Africa, where he served as ADC to the Governor-General and found time to visit Table Mountain where he proposed to his wife - Wendy - and started a partnership which was an outstanding success to the day he died. His war service, which he was usually too modest to recall. included a period commanding HMS Pytchley, his courage and leadership while in command and confronting enemy E-boats carned him a DSC.

He was appointed Head-master of Milion Abbey school in 1955, six years after leaving the Navy and at an age when many would have been happy to retire to the nearest har and spend the rest of their lives recounting their exploits. He took up his post when the school was just a year old.

Milton Abbey, near Blandford in Dorset, was a large



country house designed by Sir William Chambers, huilt in 1771-76 for the first Lord Milton and latterly owned by the Hambro family. It had been a faith-healing centre and had then lain empty when Dr C.K. Francis-Brown acquired it to found the school. At the time of Hodgkinson's appointment there were 50 boys and a hank balance which even the most optimistic politician would have found hard to justify. Confidence was in short

When his predecessor walked out without introducing him to the staff or providing any other information, Hodgkinson called the boys and staff together and expressed his own confidence in the school's future. When he announced that the uniform would change from grey suits to green shorts and every day would start with a mile run and a cold shower he encountered almost as much flak as he must have seen in Dunkirk, where he was Senior Officer of a flotilla of destroyers, and when covering the Normandy landings. His efforts there earned him a bar to his DSC for "gallantry, skill, determination and devotion to

duty" and they were qualities which never deserted him. As a headmaster he knew he faced a challenge but he persisted even when in 1956 a fire destroyed a fifth of the school huildings two days before term began. Gradually his efforts were rewarded and a place which then no one wanted to know has become one of the most sought-after schools of the 1990s, catering for 250 pupils.

The most important lessons Hughie Hodgkinson taught were not academic. He encouraged thousands of boys to discover abilities they never knew they had and gave them the self-confidence to perserve and get things right. He also urged everyone to respect the views held by others - all qualities which are helpful in life, as Hodgkinson knew from his own experiences.

As a time when minions hid ing behind a cloak of political correctness are giving education a had name, it is refreshing to recall the achievements of a man of foresight and courage who always led from the front and who set an example which others were proud to try lo

John Burder

Robert Hugh Hodgkinson, naval officer and schoolmaster: born Tarporley, Cheshire 13 January 1912; DSC and bar 1944; Head master, Milton Abbey 1955-69. married 1938 Wendy Ward-Jackson tewo sons, one daughter]: died Horton. Dorsel 22 January 1996

The Rev Donald Harris

When Donald Harris resigned as Archdeacon of Bedford in 1955 and accepted the prestigious London parish of St Paul's, Knightsbridge, it was automatically assumed he had entered the second stage of his grooming for the episcopate. A string of previous incumbents had become bishops, and Father Harris seemed eminently cut out to don the purple. But it was said that when offered a colonial hishopric he replied "No thanks" on the back of a postcard, and in the event he re-

mained at St Paul's for 23 exotic years, training able curates and ministering to a coterie of wealthy parishioners, some of whom he referred to as the Trout. "Trout for tea" in his diary meant some dowager was

due to descend. Harris was horo in 1904, three and a half months ahead of the future archhishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, with whom he shared a prep school education at King's College Choir School in Camhridge. From there Harris went to Haileybury, where he somewhat surprisingly distinguished

himself on the rugby pitch as a swift and pugnacious outside three-quarter. He returned to Cambridge, graduating in 1925, and after two years at Cuddesdon Theological College he was ordained deacon in 1927, serving his title at Chesterfield

Parish Church. It was at King's College, Cambridge, that Donald Harris, like so many clergy of his generatioo, fell under the spell of the dean, Eric Milner-White, later Dean of York, to whose influence Harris owed his alle-

Harris; Trout for tee

brand of Anglo-Catholicism that became a hallmark of his ministry. And having been a chorister at King's for four years and, from 1923 to 1926. a choral scholar, be quite naturally brought to the churches he served, in particular St Paul's, a knowledge and love of music that he used to great advantage to enrich the liturgy. For all his apparent flam-

hoyance, and deceptively languid appearance, Donald Harris was a deeply pastoral priest, much in demand as a confessor, in particular to the clergy. From 1968 to 1971 he was president of the Association for Promoting Retreats. And be was never one for flitting from pillar to post. He gave nine years to Great Greenford as rector, and a decade to St Mary's, Bedford, when for nine years he also served as Archdeacon of Bedford, before settling down to an unfashionably long haul at St Paul's. Here his preaching skills in Holy Week attracted regular visits from Princess Mar-

garet, whom be would bappily

keep waiting at the west door

while he groomed his hair in the

In 1978, aged 74, still extraordinarily youthful in appearance, Harris retired to a flat in Masham Court, Westminster. where thanks to a large legacy he lived in considerable comfort. He made no secret of his wealth, and it gave him great pleasure to use it to help other people. Even in his late eighties he remained amazingly entertaining and generous company, serving to unsuspecting luncheon guests enormous and semi-lethal cocktails, the mixing of which actually gave him very little trouble; at least ninetenths was brandy.

Michael De-la-Noy

Donald Bertram Harris, priest: born 4 August 1904: ordained deacon 1927, priest 1928; Vicar, St Mary the Less, Cambridge 1931-36; Chaplain, King's Col-lege, Cambridge 1932-33; Rector, Great Greenford 1936-45; Rector, St Mary's, Bedford 1945-55; Archdeacon of Bedford 1946-55; Vicar, St Paul's, Knightsbridge 1955-78; died London 20 January 1996.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

IN MEMORIAM

FLINTOFF: Eddie (Fed), died suddenly 29 January 1994, Loving husband, brother, father, friead, forever

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & REATHS about be posted to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, I Canado Square, Compy What, London Ed 501, 1e250, 1e260, and are charged at £6.50 n line (VAT extra).

Wills

Professor Eric Barff Birley, of Greenhead, Northumberland, Professor of Romano-British History and Archaeology at Durham University 1956-71, left estate valued at £184,000 pct.

Mr Arthur Frederick Holt, of Ambleside, Cumbria, Liberal MP (or Bolion West 1951-64, left estate valued at £209,779 oct.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS ress of Wales attends a lunch given h 1316 in 14 American Correspondents in Broom's Hutel, London Wi, Th Royal vests the Falkland Islands Changing of the Guard
The Household Creater Mounted Regiment
mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards.

Birthdays

Dr Robin Alston, bibliographer, 63; Mr Malcolm Binns, concert pianist, 60; Lord Braybrooke, Lord-Lieutenant of Essex, 64; Mr Leslie Bricusse, composer, 65; Maj-Gen Sir George Burns, 85; Mr Peter Byrne, actor and director, 68: Lord Clyde, a Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland, 64; Dr Alec Coppen, neuropsychiatrist, 73; The Right Rev Dom Charles Fitzgerald-Lombard, Abbot of Downside, 55; Mr John Forsythe, film and relevision actor, 79; Miss Germaine Greer, writer, 57: Lord Gregson, non-executive director, Fairey Group, 72; Mrs Carola Grindea, Editor, Piano Journal, 82, Professor Frank Hartley, Vice-Chancellor, Cranfield University, 54; Mr. Timothy Healy, actor and comedian, 44; Mr Paul Hodder-Williams, publisher, 86; Earl Howe, Under-Sectisher, 86; Earl Howe, Under-Sec-retary, Ministry of Defence, 45; Mr John Junkin, actor and scriptwriter, 66; Mr Sean Kerly, hockey player, 36; Miss Margaret Laird, Third Church Estates Commissioner, 63; Lord Lane of Horsell, chartered accountant, 71; Mr Henry Lewis, former deputy chairman, Berisford toternational, 70; Mr Victor Mature, film actor, 81; Mr Michael Mayor, Headmaster, Rugby School, 49, Mr Richard Needham MP, 54, Mr James Nicholson MEP. 51; Mr Cecil Redfern, chairman, Godfrey Davies, 79; Mr Andy Roberts, cricketer, 45, Miss Katharine Ross, film actress, 53; Professor Abdus Salam, Professor of Theoretical Physics, 70; Mr Tom

Selleck, actor, 51. Mr Raman Sub-

ba Row, former chairman, Test and

County Cricket Board, 64; Viscount Touypandy, former Speaker of the House of Commons, 87; Mr Brian Pubshaw, former test pilot, 72.

Anniversaries

Births: Lucy Hutchinson, biographer, 1620; Emanuel Swedenborg, sci-entist and philosopher, 1688; Daniel Bernoulli, mathematician, 1700; Thomas Paine, writer and reformer, 1737; William Sharp, line-engraver, 1749: Ernst Eduard Kummer, mathematician, 1810; William McKinley, 25th US president, 1843; Sir David Murray, artist, 1849; Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, author and playwright 1860: Frederick Delius, composer 1862; Romain Rolland, novelist. 1866; Sir William Rothenstein, artist, 1872; Havergal Brian, composer. 1876: W.C. Fields (William Claude Dukinfield), actor, 1880; Paddy Sidney Chayelsky, playwright and scriptwriter, 1923. Deaths: Pope Gelasius II, 1119; King George III, 1820; Edward Lear, landscape painter and writer, 1888; Sir William Withey Gull, physician, 1890; Alfred Sisley, landscape painter, 1899; Evclyn Baring, first Earl of Cromer diplomat. 1917; Elihu Vedder. painter, 1923; Douglas, first Earl Haig, field marshal, 1928; Bion Joseph Arnold, electrical engineer and industrialist, 1942; Harry Lloyd Hopkins, politician, 1946, James Bridie (Osborne Henry Mayor), ght and physician, 1951; Henry Louis Mencken, writer, 1956; An-gela Margaret Thirkell, novelist, 1961: Fritz Kreisler, violinist, 1962; Robert Lee Frost, poet, 1963; Alan

Ludd, actor, 1964; Jimmy (James Francis) Durante, comedian, 1980. On this day, John Guy's The Beggar's Opera was first performed, London 17.8: Oliver Goldsmith's The Good wed Man, by Oliver Goldsmith was first performed, London 1768; the Reform Parliament opened, 1833. Greenwich Mean Time was adopted in Scotland, 1848; the Victoria Cross was founded, 1856 Karl-Friedrich Benz patented a motor-driven two-scater tricycle, 1886 Desert Island Discs was first broad cast, 1942. Today is the Feast Day of

Mozart Summer Festival The Austrian Ambassador, Dr Georg Hennig, proposed a toast to the immorial memory of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart at a ceremony or Saturday at the Mozart statue in Orange Square, London SW1, wheo musicians from the Mozart Summer Festival in Stately Homes and Coun-

try Houses in 18th-century costume

played a musical inbute on the oc-

on of the anniversary of Mezart's

St Gildas the Wise, St Sabinian of Troyes and St Sulpicius "Severus".

hirth. Martha Kingdon Ward, Director of the Festival, received the guests at a reception held afterwards following the Mozart Birthday Concert at St Michael's Church, Chester Square, London SW1.

Lectures

Victoria and Albert Museum: Clare Ford-Willie, "Saints in Rena

The following notes of judgments were prepared by the reporters of the All England Law

Bankruptcy Morris v Murjani: CA (Hirst, Peter

Gibson LJL Buxton J); 20 Dec 1995 The High Court had power to grant an injunction preventing a bankrupt leaving the country, in order to secure his compliance with duties imposed by s 333 of the Insolvency Act 1986.

Matthew Collins (Nabarro Nathanson) for the bankrupt; Philip S. Marshall (Dibb Lupton Broomhead) for the trustee in bankruptcy.

Children

Re M (a minor: habitual residence); CA (Millett, Balcombe LJ); 28 Dec

The "habitual residence" of a child, for the purposes of a dispute under the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (Sch 1 to the Child Abduction and Custody Act 1985) was a question of fact. Someone must be physically resident in the country to acquire habitual residence here. A child who had by its parents' agreement lived half his life with his grandparents abroad could not ac-

CASE SUMMARIES

quire habitual residence in Britain simply by one parent's unilateral decision to bring the child back.

Allan Levy QC, Roger Bickerdike (Walker Morris, Leeds) for the father, Pamela Scriven QC, Alasdair Wilson (Castle Sanderson, Leeds) for the mother, Judith Hughes QC, Roben Cole (Official Solicitor) for the ardian ad litem.

Instices R v East Dereham Magistrates, ex p Clarke: OBD(DC) (Schiemann L.I.

Holland J); 15 Dec 1995 If one of three justices had to

leave before the conclusion of a trial, in the interests of natural justice the question of what should happen should be dealt with in open court. Submissions should be invited as to the options available and both counsel for the Crown and defence should be able to address the justices. This was advisable even though it was clear from the wording of s 121 (1) of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 that an information could be tried by only two justices. Matthew Gowen (Overbury, Steward

& Eaton, Norwich) for the applicant:

Christopher Metcalf (CPS) as on

Revenue Couch (Inspector of Taxes) v Caton's Administrators; ChD

Costs incurred in disputing a

(Rimer J): 20 Dec 1995

valuation of unquoted shares for capital gains tax purposes and the costs of an appeal to the special commissioners were not allowable as deductions in computing a chargeable gain on the disposal of the shares. De-ductible valuation costs within the Capital Gains Tax Act 1979, s 32(2)(b) (now Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, a 38(2)(h)) extended only to the initial valuation carried in order to comply with the requirement for making a return.

Launcelot Henderson QC (Inland

Revenue Solicitor) for the Crown;

William Massey (Rayner de Wolfe for Brooke North & Goodwin, Leeds) for

R v Greenwich London Borough Council, ex p Williams; QBD (Macpherson J); 19 Dec 1995 The words "likelihood of

danger to the public" in s 14 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 were not apt to enable a local authority to close a road temporarily because of en-vironmental eircumstances such as danger to the public from air pollution caused by traffic. The section only covered circumstances such as a spillage on the road making its use dangerous to the public or where a road across a heath was affected by smoke from a heath

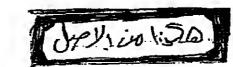
Graham Read (Leigh Day & Co) for the applicant; Martin Wood (Borough Solicitor) for the council.

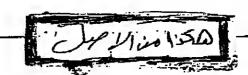
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Trade description R v Page; CA (Crum Divt (Kennedy

LJ, Judge, Clarke JJ): 14 Dec 1995 If a person giving informa-tion under s 29(1) of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968, which was reasonably required of an interviewee in an interview under caution by a trading standards officer for the purposes of the performance of the officer's function under the Act, makes a false statement, then he is liable to be prosecuted under s 29(2).

Julian Christopher (Registrar of Crimmal Appeals) for the appellant; Simon Blackford (David Over, Reading) for





business

TODAY

Companies:

Ballough, the engineering, heating and office products company, is not expected to improve on last year's £17.6m pretax profits when it reports its

full-year figures today.

The group has already warned of a drop in trading at Atal, the French office furniture subsidiary, and the City is forecasting profits of anywhere between £13.5m and £18.5m. The total dividend will stay at 6.05p a share for the year.

Eurocamp warned in June that holiday sales were sluggish and the City is expecting no fireworks from the camping holiday group today. However, the group does appear to have weathered the stubbornly high French franc with lower cross-Channel ferry charges boosting bookings for campsites in

France. NatWest Markets is forecasting full-year pre-tax profits of between £8.8m and £9.7m against £8.7m last year. Interims: Courtyard Leisure,

Filtronic Comtek, Haynes Publishing. TR Smaller Cos In-Finals: Rhône-Poulenc Rorer,

Investment Trust. Annual general meetings: Chrysalis Group, Kleinwort European, National Home Loans.

EGMs: Ingham. Economics:

rose by 1.5 per cent in November.

Interims: Adscene Group, Birkdale Group, Edinburgh Smaller Companies, Games Workshop, Kay's Food Group,

SGS-Thomson, St Andrews Trust, Trencherwood, USDC Pruperty Trust, Wyko Group. Finals: Lorien Group, Northern Rock Building Society.

Banking mortgage lending fig-ures for December will indicate whether they, too, have dropped in line with the recent fall in building society loans. In Japan, industrial production in December will be watched closely to see if the hoped-for recovery is coming through; it

TOMORROW

Companies:

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THE WEEK AHEAD

Annual general meetings: Blick, Edinburgh New Tiger, Johnson & Firth Brown, Sidlaw Group, Wolverhampton Porvair. & Dudley Breweries. EGMs: CE Heath.

The Federal Open Market Committee starts a two-day meeting in Washington amid market speculation that the US Federal Reserve may decide to cut rates again following the quarter-point reduction last December. Retail sales will provide a final indicator for the FOMC to consider. The market is expecting growth of 0.6 per cent in December.

WEDNESDAY

Companies: Interims: Anglo United, Beales Hunter, Bucknall

Group, Cavaghan & Gray, Eurodis Electron, Hidong Estate, Illingworth Morris, Kay's Food Group. Peel Holdings, Zetters. Finals: Allied Textile Companies, Fyffes, Harry Ramsden's,

Annual general meetings: Data General, Hanson, M&G Group.

EGMs: Boustead, Ellis & Everard. Economics: The Bank of England sells a further £3bn worth of gilts, this time for five-year debt.

The minutes of the meeting between Kenneth Clarke and Eddie George on 13 Decem-ber, when base rate was cut by a quarter point, will provide a clue to whether the Governor is likely to have backed the surprise follow-up reduction in January. The Council of Mortgage Londers will publish figures for mortgage repos-

sessions in the second half of

In France, the anemployment rate is expected to audge up to 11.6 per cent in November following renewed signs of economic weakness.

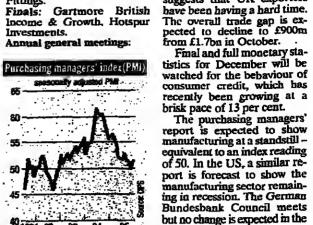
THURSDAY

Companies: Misys, the information sys-tems group, is expected to produce a sharply improved performance at the half-way stage with interim pre-tax profits more than doubled st £22.6m, according to NatWest

Markets. The banking division has embarked on new strategy that is expected enhance the de-velopment of the core products. The insurance division will benefit from last year's acqui-sition of Penta, which will strengthen Mysis' position in the personal lines intermediary software market, now above 50 per cent. .

In the information systems division a poor performance from Quasar will be compensated by a strong performance from core products.
Interims: Peter Black Holdings,
TR City of London, Wholesale

Fittings.
Finals: Gartmore British income & Growth, Hotspur Investments.



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3,000 Tr 7% 05-08
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Care UK. EGMs: Ashbourne,

discount rate.

Companies: Economics: The global trade balance for Interims: None scheduled. Finals: Malvern UK Index, November will come under Mithras Inv Trust, Motor the spotlight to see how bard the European slowdown is hit-ting UK exporters. The big fall

FRIDAY

World Group.

Annual general meetings:

Compass Group. Hozelock in imports which propelled the Group, Macdonald Martin Distilleries, Rossmont, Sec-ond Consolidated Trust, Vaux French trade balance 10 a record surplus in November suggests that UK exporters Group, Willoughby's Consoli-

EGMs: Brackenbridge Economics: The Halifax index for January

will be watched closely to see if there is a sixth successive monthly increase in bouse prices. UK official reserves for January are expected to remain

In the US, the market is expecting non-farm payrolls to grow by 125,000 following the rise of 150,000 in December. The unemployment rate is forecast to rise from 5.6 to 5.7

Economics data: Deutsche Morgan Grenfell

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Battle looms over Lloyds Chemists

Unichem, the pharmaceuticals retailer and wholesaler hoping to snap up Lloyds Chemists for £548m, faces the prospect of a full-scale takeover battle today with a potential counter-bid from Gebc, its German rival.

Gehe is believed to be study-ing closely the possibility of making an offer for Lloyds Chemists, although sources in-sisted that no final decision had yet been taken. The German company has until February 14, when the acceptances from Lloyds become unconditional, to make its bid.

Analysts said yesterday that they believed an offer from Gehe was likely, if only to force Unichem to pay more than it was originally prepared to for Lloyds Chemists.

Unichem would still be in a position to raise the stakes further, but would have to go significantly above the 414p a share Lloyds was valued at when the original bid was made. Lloyds shares rose to 420p on Friday as speculation about a rival Gehe hid mounted.

A Unicbem spokesman said the company was not prepared to comment on the possibility of a Gene counter-bid.

on 1 March," he said.

Ofgas declined to comment

on the situation but said it was

aware of the discontent. Ms

Spottiswoode cannot intervene

until directly asked to do so and

the Gas Act requires those

complaining to give British Gas about four weeks' notice before

they attack. The first calls for ac-

tion are expected to come with-

Under its price control for-

mula, TransCo is supposed to

keep increases in charges to in-

flation minus five percentage

points. But the plans for I

March would see prices for

some shippers rise by several

points above inflation because

of technical loopholes in the way

The row has angered TransCo, which accounts for the

bulk of British Gas's multi-bil-

lion-pound assets. When Ofgas

first intervened last year, Har-

ry Moulson, TransCo's manag-

ing director, complained that his

company had been in negotia-

tion with the regulator for four months and felt that the

planned increases were in line

In a letter to Ms Spottis-woode in October, Mr Moulson

said: "I must point out that

TransCo has been completely

open with Ofgas about the ef-

fects of the new prices on the different markets, and I find it

impossible to believe that Of-

gas did not already have suffi-

cient information to make a

judgement on whether or not

the formula works.

have offered a fair price which has been accepted," he said. "We shall just bave to see

whether Gehe come in." However, one analyst who has been closely observing the negotiations between Lloyds and Unichem said yesterday: "My feeling is that Gehe may make an offer. They do not want Lloyds to go cheaply. But if they do, they will be trumped by nichem in the end. "Unichem can afford to go

higher without any dilution in earnings and it is possible that they will be forced to. Lloyds has

is now a sound company with a 924 stores, Holland & Barrett, good management team in

Speculation over a possible Gebe hid follows the announcement less than two weeks ago that Lloyds Chemists had agreed to a Unichem offer for the company, which would create the UK's largest retail chain, with more than 1,300 outlets. Unichem has promised cost savings of £20m a year from its merger, equal to a third of Lloyds profits in the 12 months to June last year.

Unichem is strong in phar-

"We have been speaking for been misunderstood by the maceutical wholesaling and discharged fewer branches than itself. its health food chain, and a vet-

erinary wholesaler. The company said the creation of an integrated retailing and wholesale operation would give it added clout, trebling its retail market share from 3.5 per cent to 11 per cent, and raising its stake in the wholesaling market from a current figure of per cent

Trading under the Moss Chemists name, Unichem said the takeover would also allow it to enter the own-brand market, rivalling Boots the

The deal was also expected to nel more than £40m for Allen Lloyd, the Lloyds chairman, and his family, who hold a 7.5 per cent stake in the company he helped to found with his brother Peter almost 20 years ago. Allen Lloyd, who has a two-year £510,000 contract with Lloyds, had committed his own holding to the deal. He is expected to resign if the Unichem takeover goes through. Peter Lloyd stood down from the

company last year. Gehe, one of Europe's largest drug distributors, has

about 30 per cent of the mar-ket in Britain following its £400m acquisition last year of AAH, the distributor. The company was said yesterday to be in-terested in adding to its 300-strong Hills Pharmacy chain. However, it may find dif-ficulties in raising the funds it would need after its £400m outlay on AAH.

Lloyds bas only recently start-ed to rehabilitate itself after several years when it faced criticism in the City for its aggressive use of acquisition provisions, lack of financial information and shortage of independent voices on the board.

A City watchdog's inquiry is poised to clear insurance com-

panies and independent financial advisers of allegations that they bave been engaged in the systematic mis-selling of top-up pensions to their clients. The personal investment authority will say there is no se-

rious evidence that its members wrongly advised people to set up free-standing voluntary contribution schemes in place of company ones.

The regulator is, however, ex-

pected to repeat guidance giv-en to insurers and IFAs as to when it is appropriate to sell such policies to their clients. Its findings are aimed at damping down fears that the mis-selling of top-up pensions

was likely to lead to a repeat of the personal pension scandal. In that instance, insurers face a compensation bill worth bil-lions of pounds after a report in October 1994 said that up to 1.5 million people were wrongly advised to transfer out of their

company pension schemes. A separate PIA investigation began last year after reports that people in company pension schemes were being advised to top them up or face a lower

income at retirement. Many employees in company schemes may not bave paid enough into them to guarantee a full pension. Employers often have arrangements enabling their staff to pay additional voluntary contributions to boost retirement benefits.

Company lop-up schemes are usually cheaper because most or all of the management charges are met by employers. In contrast, anyone with a privale pension arrangement could end up paying hundreds, or even thousands of pounds in charges

by the time they retire.
Suggestions last year that advisers were promoting expensive free-standing schemes in place of cheaper company ones drew condemnation from the Trades

Union Congress. However, despite suggestions that bundreds of thousands of free-standing voluntary contri-bution schemes had been inappropriately sold, it is understood the PIA was unable to find more than a few cases

where this was the case. Il is believed that the TUC was unable to produce evi-dence to back its claims. Garry Heath, chief executive of the IFA Association, the advisers' trade body, said: "This confirms what we thought. Our members acted in the best interest of their

Pipeline dispute for British Gas

Industrial Correspondent

Britisb Gas faces a fresb row over charges levied on other companies that need to use its pipes. At least seven companies, including Amerada Hess and Total Gas, are understood to have warned the company that they will use powers under the Gas Act to have planned increases in charges overturned by

the watchdog. Ofgas.
Under the Gas Act, companies using the pipes have the right to ask Clare Spottiswoode, director general of Ofgas, to block price changes and impose new - and, they hope, lower ones on British Gas.

Use of this power, never called on before by the industry, would be the latest in a serics of blows suffered by the company and would come only weeks before the domestic market is due to be opened to competition in the South-west. Rivals to British Gas, which include offshore companies and electricity firms, fear that high pipeline charges would squeeze their margins enough to make it harder to compete in the newly opening marketplace. Some of the new entrants are planning to undercut British Gas's domestic prices by up to 15 per

The débacle over pipeline charges began last year when British Gas outraged its rivals with proposals to increase its charges for use of its pipelines by up to 10 per cent in some cases and was persuaded by Of-gas to think again. But the revised prices - due to come into effect on 1 March, are still much higher than the industry believes is justified or is prepared to accept.

A spokesman for British Gas's pipeline arm, TransCo.

Virgin 'close to rail link victory' NIC CICUTTI and MARY FAGAN

the impending battle but was not intending to change its Virgin, the airline-to-vodka empire beaded by Richard Bran-"We have sent out revised son, is believed to be close to prices and we are sticking to those. It is a less high increase clinching the £3bn deal with the Government to build the Channel Tunnel rail link. than originally proposed and it will come into effect as planned

A consortium that includes Virgin has been holding detailed talks with senior Department of Transport officials over the project to build the 68-mile link between London and the Kent mast. An announcement is expected next month.

The rival bidder Eurorail. backed by the construction groups Trafalgar House and BICC, was said yesterday to have fallen by the wayside after doubts were cast about its experience. But sources close to Eurorail said the partners re-

If the deal goes to Virgin's consortium, London & Continental Railways, il will go some way to overcoming disappointments at Virgin after losing bids both to run the National Lottery and the new Channel 5 television service. The L&CR consortium includes National Express, the bus company, Bechtel, the American construction group, and SBC Warburg, the merchant bank.

In a separate move, Virgin has also embarked on an ambitious expansion of its book publishing business, emerging as with regulations governing the | a final bidder in the £100m auction of Reed Consumer Books from Reed Elsevier.

The acquisition would give Virgin rights to a star-studded stable of authors including William Boyd and Roddy Doyle, and to well-loved names such as Winnie the Poob and Thomas the Tank Engine.

It is believed that a rail link deal might include granting L&CR a 999-year contract to run the trains. Financing the rail



On the line: Success In the rail bid and with the Reed auction would be a strong boost for Richard Branson's Virgin

flotation of L&CR, in which Virgin is said to have a 15 per cent stake, next year. Building the new line from its new terminus at Kings Cross to the coast would be completed with-

in about six years. Meanwhile, Virgin and National Express would take over the running of the Eurostar rail service to the Continent. Virgin link would come from a public has already declared an inter-

est in running the Gatwick Express airport shuttle service, but there is fierce competition for the route, with British Airways rumoured to be interested.

Sources claim that Eurorail's bid, the rival to L&CR, is being vetoed by ministers who do not believe it could lift flagging sales of Eurostar tickets. However, it is understood that it is out of the running. Senior members of its team were holding discussions at the Department of Transport on

Virgin's planned publishing acquisition would add names such as Hamlyn, Heinemann, Mcthuen and Secker & Warburg to its book operation, which made a profit last year of thal Eurorall is disputing claims about £1.5m on a turnover of

£15m. Virgin is thought to have trumped offers from a number of venture-capital backed rivals.
The bid falls far short of the

£250m price tag some City an-alysts originally thought Reed Consumer Books might command before a fall in profits and the recent demise of the Net Book Agreement. Virgin declined to comment on the proposed takeover.

the prices were in accordance said the company was aware of with the authorisation." Surveyors predict property revival

TOM STEVENSON City Editor

Commercial property values will start rising again this year after a year of underperformance against other asset classes and continued divestment by investing institutions, according to an industry survey out today. The findings by the Royal In-stitution of Chartered Surveyors chime with other reports this week pointing to increasing overseas interest in UK property, increasing tenant demand and rising rents.

Graham Chase, RICS property spokesman, said: "During 1996, tax cuts and falling interest rates will improve consumer confidence, benefitting the property sector and the economy as a whole. We forecast that commercial property values will

rise by 6 per cent this year." He added, however, that tenants remained in the driving seat, with landlords still forced to offer incentives such as rent

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free periods and short leases at low rents for all but the very best

According to property adviser DTZ Debenham Thorpe, property values will also be driven by overseas interest which remains strong, despite a disappointing return last year of 5.3 per cent from property compared with 24 per cent from UK equities and 34 per cent from US shares.

Thanks to the purchase of Canary Wharf. US huyers emerged as the largest source of foreign investment last year, taking over from the Germans. They have been attracted by

the high yields available on property compared to fixed interest investments such as gilts. As interest rates fall, property values are expected to rise throughout 1996. Shortage of new building is pushing rents higher in favoured tocations such as central London, which in turn is attracting overseas participation in development.

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Source: FT Information

STOCK MARKETS

US rate hopes rise as economy weakens

Economics Editor

The key policymaking commit-tee of the US Federal Reserve meets tomorrow with hopes riding high that it will cut interest rates by a further quarter point to 5.25 per cent. Mark Cliffe, international economist at HBSC Markets said the odds favour such a cut:

"They showed in December that they were ready to cut rates despite the ongoing wrangling over the budget, and the evi-dence since then is that the economy continues to weaken." With yields on three month Treasuries at just over 5.10 per cent last Friday, the market is pricing in a further reduction in the Federal funds rate at which

banks lend to each other overnight. Yields three years out are well below 5.25 per cent. The extent to which the market expects a further cut can be gauged from the drop in yields

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Fed reduced the target fed funds rate last December. This has been particularly marked at the short end of the yield curve. The markets' confidence that US Fed will cut rates again comes from accumulating evi-

dence that the economy is weakening and that inflation remains under control. Employment growth was slightly stronger than anticipated, with non-farm payrolls rising in December. However hours worked fell and the January Employment Report is expected to see growth of only 125,000 jobs. The unemploy

ment rate is forecast to rise from 5.6 to 5.7 per cent. A particular area of weakness is manufacturing. The inventory overhang is putting manufact turers under intense pressure to satisfy demand from stocks. Meanwhile the Fed's recent

Beige Book was notable for the absence of inflationary pres-sures. Consumer price inflation on most US Treasuries since the rose 2.6 per cent in November.

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US interest rates

INTEREST RATES

IN BRIEF

Return of consumer confidence forecast

Sales of food, drink and tobacco are expected to rise sharply over the next few months as consumer confidence reappears in the UK economy, according to forecasts by the Chartered Institute of Marketing. The survey of UK's sales and marketing experts' views, showed the service sector is expected to strengthen, while manufacturing, including machinery and equipment is weakening.

KKR interest in Meridien hotel chain

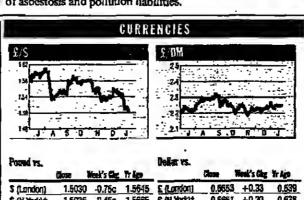
Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, the US arbitrageur, is understood to be among several potential buyers lining up for the Meridien and Exclusive hotels chains being sold by Granada following its successful £3.9bn bid for the Forte group. Other interested buyers are said to include Hilton, Marriott. ITT Sheraton and Accor.

Smaller companies at a standstill

Orders from small and medium firms have been at a virtual standstill in the past four months, according to a survey carried out by the Confederation of British Industry and chartered accountant Pannell Kerr Forster. It showed that output for small and medium enterprises grew at the slowest rate since October 1993. Investment intentions in plant and machinery are at their lowest since January 1993. Although demand is expected to grow in com-ing months, business optimism fell for the second consecutive time.

Equitas may receive £500m boost

Warren Buffett, the US investor, is believed to be considering injecting £500m in Equitus, the Lloyds rescue vehicle which re-cently announced it needs a further £1.9bn to meet the run-off of asbestosis and pollution liabilities.



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GAVYN DAVIES

The Maastricht convergence criteria are automatically met if the Council of Ministers, voting by a qualified majority, deem that they are met. It is not a matter of examining figures on pieces of paper -

it is the Council's vote

that matters'

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Reports of EMU's still-birth are exaggerated ast week, this column discussed the

intensely unpleasant political situation that would be created for the UK if European monetary union went ahead on schedule in 1999, while we opted to remain

Although this would probably he the ecooomically sensible thing to do, at least for a time, it would disenfranchise us on most future policy developments inside the European Union, and carry great political costs. How much better for Whitehall if the impossible dilemma of whether to join should simply disappear - if the whole monetary union project should shrivel up and die.

The British government's desire for this to happen is reaching fever pitch. They know e present decline in European growth may offer the last and best chance of scup-pering the project. So they have decided to rub salt into what is, thus far, not a fatal EMU wound by suggesting that an official post-ponement will be announced in the next few months. A Machinellian interest term months. A Machiavellian interpretation, doubtless far too uncharitable, would be that the UK is trying to stir up trouble in the financial markets in the hope that this will force the French to abandon the 1999 start

So far, there is no indication from either the French or German governments (which are the only ones that matter) that any change in the Maastricht timetable is imminent. But there are at least three possible ways in which this could conceivably happen this year. The first would be a financial crisis, leading to a final abandonment of the frunc fort policy in Paris; the second a loss of political will in Germany; and the third an eventual acceptance by all concerned that the Maastricht convergence criteria will not be hit by 1997. The first of these possibilities - a fioan-cial market anack on franc fort - certainly cannot be ruled out. After all, this is what finally hlew up the exchange rate mechanism in 1992/93. But the present pottey regime is not as vulnerable to speculative attack as was the old ERM. The central banks are not trying to defend a fixed exchange rate in a narrow band, so they can choose to give ground to the speculators for short periods.

In addition, the core problem four years ago was that the Bundesbank wanted to tighten German monetary policy, while everyone else needed to ease policy. That is not the case now - the German economy is at least as weak as the rest of Europe, if not more so, and the Bundesbank is reducing

interest rates in an aggressive fashion.

The fact that the Germans see it as being in their own vital interest to protect the franc means that the situation is objectively very different from that io 1992. Of course, the French nerve might still crack - the next few months could be very bleak as unemployment rises again - but this time there is genuine light at the end of the tunnel. The recent drop in interest rates will be having powerful expansionary effects by the end of the year, and the mood could then change quite

dromatically.
What about Germany? Any British offi-cial who believes that Chancellor Kohl is spontaneously going to ditch the second great objective of his political life - German reunification being the first - is suffering from delusions. As long as he is around, the German commitment to EMU will be too. There is always the possibility that the Free Democrats will leave the governing coalition, or splinter, thus letting in the Social Democrats, but it would be unwise to bet on it.

This leaves the third possibility - that it becomes appearent in the course of this year that either France or Germany will be unable to meet the Maastricht convergence criteria by

1997. A renewed recession in Europe would | are taken, the hudget deficits in both councertainly leave both countries struggling to hit the required budget deficit (3 per cent of GDP) and debt ratio (60 per cent of GDP)

The table shows the latest Goldman Sachs forecasts for the government finances in Ger-many and France in the next two years. The main forecast is based on GDP growth of around 1.5 per cent in both countries this year. followed by a renewed acceleration to well over 2 per cent in 1997. Even on this assumption, which many would think is too op-timistic, there could be some serious problems for the 1999 start date, since both countries would probably miss the 3 per cent deficit target, and Germany would miss the debt target as well.

However, the real problem would come in the more pessimistic case for GDP growth, which shaves I per cent off the level of GDP both this year and next. If this occurs, and if no offsetting budgetary measures

tries next year would be close to 4 per cent of GDP, which misses the Maastricht fimit

by a wide margin.

Or does it? The convergence criteria in the Maastricht Treaty are in fact automatically met if the Council of Ministers, voting by a qualified majority, deem that they are met It is ool a matter of examining figures on pieces of paper - it is the Council's vote that matters.

In reaching its decision, the Council must take the advice of both the Commission and the Europeao Monetary Institute, which in turn are expected to consider whether government finances are "sustainable" and wbether deficits are "excessive" or subject to

'eross errors". To deciding this, the Commission and the EMI are asked by the treaty, albeit in rather vague language, to look at the 3 per cent and 60 per cent figures discussed above. But even here there are plenty of loopholes. The deht

	Budget & deb	t under lower growth		
Germany (% of GDP)	1995	1998	1997	
Main forecast				15
Budget balance*	-3.6	-3.8	-3.3	
Debt ratio (GDP growth)	58.7 (1.9)	60.7 (1.5)	61.8 (2.2)	
Lower GDP growth				9
Budget balance	-3.6	-4.A	3.9	
Debt ratio (GDP growth)	58.7 (1.9)	81.9 (0.5)	63.5 (2.2)	÷
France				
Male forecast		. '		
Budget balance*	5.2	-4.4	-3.4 ,	13.5 14.5 14.5
Debt ratio (GDP growth)	51 4 (2.5)	53.2 (1.8)	53.5 (2.8)	3.
Lower GDP greath			•	70,
Budget balance	-5.2	-4.9	-3.9 -	()
Debt ratio (GDP growth)	51.4 (2.5)	54.2 (0.8)	55.0 (2.8]	

ratio is permitted to exceed 60 per cent "unless that ratio is sufficiently diminishing and approaching the reference value at a satisfactory pace". And the budget deficit can exceed 3 per cent "unless the excess is only exceptional and temporary, and the ratio re-

mains close to the 3 per cent limit". The point is that all this leaves an awful lot of room for debate, both inside the Cornmissioo and EMI, and within the Council

It may even leave enough room for an uoholy alliance of the opt-outs and the left-outs to block mooetary unioo by elaiming in the Council that France and Germany have not achieved convergence, even if both countries are determined to press ahead.

A key figure io this debate will be Alexandre Lamfalussy, the President of the EML He has receotly said that the advice of his institution will be based on a "professional, not a political, interpretation" of the treaty. This has been taken to mean that only a small deviation from the 3 per ceot budget limit will be permitted, and certainly the Buodesbank President (who sits on the board of the EMI, and will separately publish his own views) would be expected to take this

But you oever know. We bave seen several times lately that economies can turn on a sixpence. If Europe grows rapidly next year, with budget deficits starting to tumble, the 1999 start date could come back on the agenda - or at least the EU could decide to delay by only a year or two, still under the Maastricht framework. Given these geouine uocertainties, it seems uooecessary for France and Germany to take the crucial decisions any time soon.

So, however many fingers are fervently being crossed in Whitehall, this EMU may not yet be a clinically dead duck.

The high-flyer with an ear to the ground

Everyone has to have a Big Idea these days. At British Airways, Boh Ayling's is individual responsibility. Out go the inter-

minable meetings, the hierarchy, the buck-passing. In comes initiative, creativity and Irust, Mr Ayling's mission as BA's new chief executive is to cut out layers of management and devolve responsibility.

The number of senior executives reporting to his prede-cessor, Sir Colin Marshall, was 25. In his re-shuffle announced this month, Mr Ayling settled for 11. "You cannot effectively create a team out of 25 managers," Mr Ayling said. "Some people say you only need six or eight to have an effective team."

Staff complained to him that layers of management smothered good ideas and stopped things getting done, so there is going to be a change of style at BA, he said. "That style is go- part in change, they know why series of deals." ing to be a less hierarchical one. We must put much more authority into the hands of people on the front line."

Mr Ayling, 48, says all this in a dry, rather laid-back way which belies the enthusiasm of his message. But there is no doubt it comes from the heart. He stepped up from his £508,000 managing director's job this month. His appointment was not only widely expected but widely welcomed by staff, who viewed Sir Colin, and Lord King before him, as somewhat aloof. "My style is a fairly mformal one," Mr Ayling said, adding that be never found his two predecessors remote in any way. Certainly, he said, they were excellent mentors, especially for a man who has no formal management training.

Low morale was highlighted in a receot BA staff report. There was criticism that line managers were ineffective, and In the search for the Big Idea, BA's new chief has chosen a simple one - communication

that there was a lack of communication. "I recognise both these as being problems in some areas, and I am determined to do something about it. Already we have started a really radical change in the way we

communicate as a company." Next month be conducts a week-long presentation to 5,000 staff, representing 10 per cent of BA's workforce. Twice-daily hroadcasts will he beamed to employees around the world. "This is going to reveal in a very open way all the issues that face no point in keeping these secret.

its \$400m investment after industrial unrest, air crashes and fierce competition turned the 24.6 per cent stake into a millstone. Although USAir is slowly being turned around, Mr Ayling acknowledges that the high cost base is still a problem.

BA last week put further investment in the US operator on bold, but analysts say BA will have to expand its presence in America. The US aviation industry is poised for consolidation, and rumours that a BA deal with American Airlines is us as an organisation. There is just around the corner refuse to die. Mr Ayling admits that all They have to be exposed to the operators are talking to everyooe in the company, so each other, but warns that any that when they are asked to take big alliance will spark a whole part in change, they know why series of deals. "Whoever

THE MONDAY INTERVIEW

ROBERT AYLING

these things are happening." This month's management reshuffle also hinted at likely changes in corporate strategy. There was a new position of director of acquisitions and investments, and someone to develop BA's "interests with USAir", the American partner. Mr Ayling denies that these moves are to kick new life into BA's stalled global alliance strategy. "What I have got to do is pick up the legacy of our var-ious investments and take them on to the next stage. I will very much be concentrating on that. We bave espoused this strategy and we have now got to carry it forward."

His biggest headache is USAir, where BA wrote off half

jor airline and the economic trade-offs. Other governments rightly view airports as a huge source of wealth creation." Mr Ayling still finds it "quite surprising" to be heading one of the UK's most celebrated

companies. He did not have the best start for a life in the fast track, having beeo withdrawn from public school because of his parents' financial problems, and baving missed out on university. This may have been a belp rather than hindrance. "It makes you self-reliant much younger, and you always feel you have to achieve something. hreaks the mould will put in play Also, you start on this ladder of a chain reaction over which they experience much sooner." have no cootrol. It's a bit like

He always wanted to be five-sided chess. It would be a lawyer, and at 24 he became the youngest partner in Elborne brave person who forecast bow it is going to end." He said BA's immediate needs were satisfied Mitchell, aviatioo insurance solicitors. Five years later he with its USAir investment, hut went on: "Our arrangement with USAir is not exclusive. If moved to the Department of Trade and Industry, and later worked as a legal adviser to Nor-man Tebbit on the hill paving we felt it was right to do somethe way for BA's privatisation. He was noticed at BA, which be The European aviation injoined as legal director. dustry also faces a shake-up as the continuing use of state aid

It has been a rapid rise, and to prop up loss-makers beinevitably social pleasures took comes an economic unreality. a back seat. He still manages to Mr Ayling said: "The taxpayers escape to the Welsh hills to go walking. Regular trips to watch tolerating a situation where his beloved Chelsea are, howthey personally subsidise the exever, a thing of the past.

Russell Hotten



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A company worth being seen with As dreams go this one was in the "not too distant future" of companies from its parent citic Pacific is now trading on pretty predictable – an all-en- Citic Pacific would supplant and a 12 per cent stake in Ca- a p/e ratio of over 20 times,

compassing Chinese house, like the British-controlled Swires and Li Ka-shing's own Hutchior Jardines conglomerates. The Brits are, after all, on the way out and the Chinese oo the way in, so it seemed only natural that the new order be reflected in a Chinese company enjoying the pre-eminence once accorded to to dominate the colony.

The dream was supposed to become reality with the establishment of a listed company called Citic Pacific, a subsidiary of the Chinese state-owned China International Trust and Investment Corporation, estahlished by Rong Yiren, who is now one of China's vice-presidents. His son, the golf- and borse-loving Larry Yung, was dispatched to run the show and a queue of Hong Kong busi-

nessmen lined up to do business. First in the queue was Li Kashing, reputedly the riebest man in Hong Kong, who linked his Cheung Kong group with the new entity. Other heavyweights, such as the sugar, media and property tycoon Robert Kuok, piled in. Citic Pacific was off to a flying start. Even the big British conglomerates beat a path to Citic Pacific's door.

A regional magazine colum-

Swire Pacific, Jardine Matheson son Whampoa as "the hong to

That was four years ago, but things have not quite worked out like that. Citic Pacific spent its formative years buying stakes in all manner of companies hut seemed, a

notion of bemore than a warehouse for bolding

stakes some of the colony's largest companies. The one company Citic Pacific bought and managed itself, Dah Chong Hong, a trading company, has started to bleed red ink all over the bal-

ance sbeet. However Citic Pacific's record neither stopped the rise of its share price nor thwarted its impressive ability to raise funds in the market. No sooner was it listed than it came back to the market with a placement raising the HK\$2.2bn (£188m) it oeeded to buy Hang Chong, the company controlling Dah

Chong Hong. In 1993 Citic Pacific was back

ble and Wireless's Hongkong Telecom. It also bought a 12.5 per ceot in Swire's Cathay Pacific Airways, again obligingly fi-nanced by the market.

of Europe clearly will not go on

thing else, we would."

istence of airlines."

Companies are keen to have Citic Pacific as a shareholder because they believe it provides pre-eminence once accorded to the so-called hongs which used in all manner of companies hut the so-called hongs which used in all manner of companies hut the chinese controlled in all manner of companies hut the chinese controlled

VIEW FROM ture partner because HONG KONG they see this as a good way of se-

> funds for developments. So Citic Pacific is in the happy position of turning away attractive investment possibilities. It is involved in banking, credit cards, telecommunications. trading, property development.

> curing tenders and attracting

infrastructure projects and a bost of other projects. As the company bas grown Larry Yung has become a very rich man indeed. Last May be sold share options for a total of HK\$198.8m (£17m) to Citic Hong Kong (Holdings), the privately beld company which

controls Citic Pacific. Sharebolders in Hong Kong again with a HKS7.17bn place- are not fazed by directors cashnist expressed the opinioo that ment, to allow it to buy a clutch ing out of their companies and

roughly twice the market average, meaning that investors believe the capital growth of their shareholding will far outstrip its immediate earnings poteotial. However some doubts are beginning to surface. The com-

pany seems to recognise that it needs to assume a more proactive role in managing its assets. This may be why it recently embarked on another cashraising spree, building up a battle chest for acquiring oew

projects. Last October it raised HK\$2.4 bn from a syndicated loan, taking the opportunity to deoy that there would be a further placement. Denials of this nature are commonplace in Hong Kong so a placement three months later, which added HK\$3.24bn to the coffers, came as no surprise.

Meanwhile Citic Pacific be gan judiciously selling assets, reducing its holdings in Hongkong Telecom, Cathay and the development of the former British military beadquarters, which occupies a prime property site. The sum total of all this effort was almost HK\$10.5bn in cash. Meanwhile, the jury is still out

on what Citic Pacific really intends to do to establish itself as the first among hongs.

Trumpeter sounds clarion call as opera looks forward to opening doors to the masses

Cut-price London production of 'La Bohème' niggles the establishment



When Puccini first premièred La Bohème - arguably the best known opera of all - on 1 Feb-ruary 1896 in Turin, it was an instant hit. After appearances in Manchester, New York and Paris, the musical rale of the fragile flower girl Mimi made its London debut in Covent Garden in 1899. To celebrate its centenary, La Bohème again starts a London run on 1 February, this Thursday.

Yet instead of a Covent Garden run at the Royal Opera House, this production is caus-ing ructions in the opera world. The music promoter Raymond Gubbay is bringing La Bohème to the Royal Albert Hall, at a fraction of Royal Opera House

He has already called the Royal Opera House "élitist and wasteful" and the marketing of this production has caused questions to be asked about the nature of opera subsidy and about the Royal Opera House and English National Opera.

Gubbay has thrown down the gauntlet, with a maximum ticket price of £37, compared with more than £100 for a Royal Opera House production, and hopes to fill 40,000 scats in the Royal Albert Hall over the next two weekends. Ticket sales so far have reached 25,300 in the performances from five to

nine.

He said yesterday: "It's a completely different thing from House does. what the Opera House does. This is performed in the round of the Albert Hall, and from the sales, it's very clear we're going



Welcome to the cheap seats; Rehearsals in Bow, east London, for Raymond Gubbay's 'La Bohème', which stars Vivien Tiernay (above left) Main photograph: Peter Mecdiamid

way beyond the normal opera audience.

There is also a successful touring production of La Bohème from Opera North, with ticket prices from £7-£36, but that has not come under fire from Gubbay. Opera North's production is almost sold out this revolutionary new way of and after its current run at the same time. We do live free selling opera and he has upped Lecds' Grand Theatre, will tour relays into Covent Garden pi-Hull, Sunderland, Nottingham and Manchester.

The Royal Opera House, which was criticised last year when it received £78.5m in National Lottery funding, has hit back, arguing that the scale of Gubbay's productions is not in

the same league as its own efforts. Fraser Gordon, who has worked at the Royal Opera

House for eight years, said: "This can fill an auditorium of 25,000 but we only have a 2,000 capacity and we have got orchestras, operas and ballets doing different productions all at azza, and all this has to be paid

"It's different quality. They're not going to be getting someone like Bernard Haitink to conduct, one concert for them." Gubhay's production, di-

or Placido Domingo to sing for

rected by Michael Hunt, has two casts including both Katerina Kudriavchenko and Susan Bullock in the lead role of Mimi. Jose Avocar and Arthur Davies alternate as Rodolfo and Vivien Tierney and Anne Williams-King share the role of Muset-

New costumes have been designed by John Bright, who won an Oscar for his work on Howards End, and the entire cast has been rehearing together for the past four weeks, which is unusually long for the production of such an established opera. Yesterday the cast of about 90 and the orchestra

By Portia

were putting the final stages of their production together at the Three Mile Island in Bow, east London.

The Royal Opera House has so far had a disastrous 1996. It has suffered terrible publicity from staff redundancies, problems finding a temporary venue from 1997-99, and a BBC2 documentary portraying huge internal management squabbles. Raymond Gubbay said last

night: "I had a handwritten letter from Jeremy Isaacs (the Royal Opera House director) the other day, asking me not to be so abusive about the House. That struck me as strange given that anyone watching the

greater level of abuse.

"La Bohème is being done commercially but that doesn't mean it won't be done with any less love or care than it it was at Covent Garden. This shows there's a mass market for opera if you can market a show prop-

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1 Pass it to be acceptable

Only time contents of or-

der is out of date (8)

11 Member resisting pressure to show off (5) 12 Have a job with the Ital-

ian note (7) 13 Go, taking second place in contest (7)

cused (5) 15 That wore out causing trouble (3,5) 18 Scrubs dish ? (8)

10 Lazy state of undress? (9) 20 Bill left with a percussion instrument (5) 23 Medicinal oil removed cold from a jar (7)

25 Alternative firm is backing key area of growth (7) 24 26 Told to feed horses (5)

27 He's no chance holding one old crazy boatman

28 Girlfriend without Leo's upset and lonely (8) 29 Austrian composer gets space in Norwegian city (6)

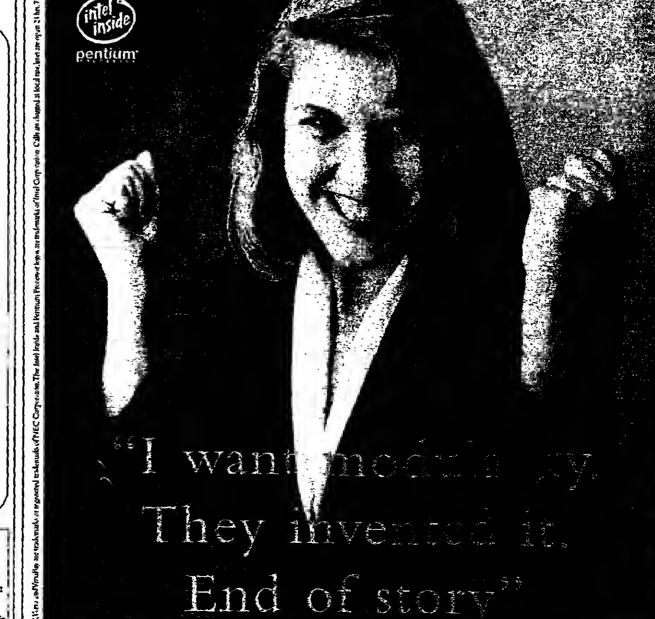
> DOWN Man lies about adulterated cocaine drug (8) Turn Australian on to a Dutch philosopher (7) Land transport? (6,3) Petition she'd be producing is irrelevant (6,3.5) Expels Pole taken in by public school head (5) On the road in France

English society brought over suitable prize (6) Currently suffer from financial problems? (4.3,7) 16 All right investing in rich tea processing plant (9)
17 Maybe collar government

19 Shore up shaky classical musician (7) 21 Position for giving birth

official (8)

22 Tatty goods inside end up expensive (6) Number practice with beginner getting birdie (5)

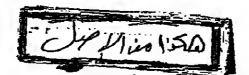


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